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Policy and Practice in
Multicultural and Anti-Racist
Education - A Case study of a
Multi-Ethnic Comprehensive
School.

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Submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy at the
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Sociology of Education

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Policy and Practice in Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education: A Case study of a Multi-ethnic Comprehensive School

Abstract

This research follows work conducted by the Education team at the Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations at the University of Warwick into the development and implementation of Local Education Authority (L.E.A.) policies on Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education. It consists of a detailed ethnographic case study of a multi-ethnic, inner-city comprehensive school which espoused a commitment to Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education, and concentrates on the school's efforts to put this commitment into practice.

Initially the study provides an elaboration of the values underpinning Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education, most notably equal opportunities and education for a non-racist society, and a discussion of the implication of these values for school practice. This discussion provides a model with which the practices in the case study school are compared. A number of theoretical questions concerning the extent to which within-school processes contribute to reproduction of the social characteristics of modern society are also introduced. A detailed description of the social context, structure and organisation of the school is presented and then the study focusses on the development of L.E.A. and school policies on Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education, teachers' interpretations of and responses to these policies, and the practice of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education in the school. The study also examines the processes of differentiation and how they affected ethnic minority students. Finally it examines the strategies which many teachers adopted in order to 'survive' as teachers in what was a 'difficult' inner city school and the implications of these strategies for the educational opportunities available to the students who attended the school.

The overall argument presented is that the teachers in the school had gone a considerable way towards developing Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education especially in curriculum terms, and had succeeded in creating a

non-racist environment within the school. The study found that there were few practices which restricted the chances of educational success of ethnic minority students within the school. However, teachers were forced to adopt 'survival strategies' in order to cope in the classroom and school with students who were sometimes hostile and frequently indifferent to their schooling, and thus the quality of educational provision offered to the students was reduced. Such student attitudes, it is suggested, were derived from wider youth, class and ethnic sub-cultures generated outside the school in part by the structural features of contemporary society.

The study concludes with a discussion of the implications of the research findings for school and L.E.A. policies on Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education and makes suggestions for further research.

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Preface

The Background to the Research

In 1981 the E.S.R.C. Research Unit on Ethnic Relations then based at the University of Aston (now the Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations at the University of Warwick) established a research programme entitled 'Education and Ethnicity'. Its aim was to provide 'an account of the demands made on the education system by ethnic minorities and the ways in which the educational system has responded to these demands'. The first stage of this research programme concentrated on the development of policy about Multicultural Education in four Local Education Authorities (L.E.A.s) (Rex, Troyna and Naguib 1983). One of the central aims of this work was to rectify an imbalance in educational research on 'race and education' towards research into 'micro-level' issues of classroom interaction, curriculum development and language work by studying the policy context within which such issues developed. The research attempted to observe and reconstruct historically the process of policy making in the area of Multicultural Education and examine the complex political, ideological and educational factors which influenced the process. It sought also to examine the role and function of such policy developments and to comment on their efficacy. One of the L.E.A.s studied, sited at the centre of a large industrial conurbation in the north of England, the research team named Milltown. Barry Troyna and Wendy Ball, in describing the team's approach to the research here, explained that they addressed six specific questions:

Firstly, what particular definition of multicultural education was used in Milltown's policy statement? Why did the L.E.A. choose this particular approach? What were the key continuities and discontinuities with past policy and provision on this issue? Did the policy actually represent a radical departure in educational orthodoxy? What sort of problems were associated with the particular notion of multicultural education adopted, and what did it leave out or fail to address?' (Troyna and Ball 1985a,p.313)

I will provide a more detailed review of this work later. Suffice it to say here that the conclusions of the team following the first stage of their work were that L.E.A. policies on Multicultural Education, whilst representing an advance on previous policies based on the principles of 'assimilationism', were

often hurriedly compiled in response to political pressures and immediate local circumstances rather than the result of thorough consultation, debate and thoughtful planning. The statements tended to make rather dubious assumptions about the efficacy of Multicultural Education and make reference to grand, but vague, educational principles which on analysis differed little from the traditional educational orthodoxy. Moreover, very little thought appeared to have been put into the implementation of these policies.

The second stage of the research programme attempted to examine this latter issue - the implementation of L.E.A. policies. As Troyna and Ball pointed out in their review of this work (1985a), L.E.A. officials, committed educationalists, and ethnic minority organisations have tended to assume that policy statements on multicultural education 'will act as catalysts of change' (p.318). Accordingly the research team decided to look at the way in which L.E.A. policies were received and implemented in schools, and whether or how they influenced teacher practice at 'the chalk face'. Troyna and Ball, who conducted this stage of the research, decided to concentrate their efforts in Milltown, an L.E.A. whose policy making process they had already studied and where contact had been established with a number of L.E.A. personnel (see Troyna and Ball 1985b for a full account of this research).

In the first part of this work Troyna and Ball interviewed a sample of the L.E.A.'s headteachers. They argued that headteachers would be key figures in the translation of policy into practice since in the decentralised British educational system they were the most powerful 'reality definers' in their particular schools, able to wield great influence over curriculum, pedagogy and broader school practices and procedures. Their responses to L.E.A. policy would thus be of crucial importance. This research revealed that 'the L.E.A.'s policy and related initiatives had made limited impact on the routine practices and procedures of local schools as they were described to us by headteachers' (1985a,p.319) Whilst most heads expressed an awareness of and support for L.E.A. policy, few had made very much effort to translate it into action. Moreover, the schools that had made some attempts were in general those with high proportions of ethnic minority students. Multicultural education appeared to be regarded as a something appropriate only to such schools. This seemed to fly in the face of the L.E.A.'s espoused commitment to fostering multiculturalism in all its schools.

Troyna and Ball found a similar pattern in the second part of this work. Following their interviews with headteachers they conducted a postal survey of a

sample of departmental and faculty heads in the L.E.A.'s secondary schools and sixth form colleges, aiming to get a more detailed and accurate picture of the responses of ordinary classroom teachers to the policy and to find out what changes in practice had occurred. Again, few teachers had placed the issue high on their agenda and few had made any significant alterations to their established practices. Those that had were invariably in schools with a high number of ethnic minority students. This discrepancy between policy and practice in Multicultural Education led Troyna and Ball, in an article in the Times Educational Supplement (1983), to ask whether Multicultural Education policies were actually 'worth the paper they're written on' and to question their efficacy as change-agents(1).

Troyna (1985) suggests a number of possible explanations for this phenomenon. The negative racial attitudes of some teachers, could be a factor. But also important, he suggests, is the recognition that Multicultural Education is a 'progressive' innovation and as such has suffered the fate of other similar reforms (see Whiteside 1978) in a climate of contracting educational provision, falling rolls, teacher redeployment, worsening teacher-student ratios, and general retrenchment in education. Troyna speculates that the moves towards multicultural reforms in ethnically mixed schools may be more the product of their efficacy in easing problems of alienation and social control in such schools than of commitment to the principles of such reforms. He is also critical of the absence of clear rationales and specific guidelines from many of the policy statements and the inappropriate implementation strategies adopted by the majority of L.E.A.s. This has meant that in the decentralised British educational system the policy statements can quite simply be ignored by many schools and teachers.

The research which is reported here forms part of this second stage of the 'Education and Ethnicity' programme. Following their interview and survey work, the Education Team were interested in examining in more detail how schools and individual teachers responded to L.E.A. policies in Multicultural Education, and what the effects of these policies actually were at school level. They also wanted to find out more about what teachers were actually doing, rather than what they said they were doing. It was decided that the best way of doing this would be to conduct a number of ethnographic studies, where members of the team would be able to observe practice in schools from the inside. This document reports the first of these investigations. In 1984 contact was established with the newly appointed headteacher of a multi-ethnic secondary school in an inner city area

of Milltown, which will be referred to during this report as Milltown High School. After fairly lengthy discussions access was negotiated for a member of the Education Team to work in the school over a two year period (September 1985 to July 1987).

The school was interesting for a number of reasons. First, the headteacher professed a strong commitment to the implementation of the L.E.A.'s policy on Multicultural Education. In the year before the research started the L.E.A. began to reformulate its policy to include the notion of Anti-Racist Education, and the head also expressed support for this move. Indeed he had been appointed partly on the basis of his commitment to the ideals and philosophy which the L.E.A. wished to encourage in its schools. Secondly, the school had something of a history of engagement with the issue of Multicultural Education. In the late 1970's, well before the L.E.A. formulated its policy, a school working party had been formed which spent three years examining the subject and in its report a strong commitment was espoused to the principles of Multicultural Education. The school came to achieve a local and national reputation for its work in the area and was praised by H.M.I. during their study of seven multi-ethnic comprehensive schools in 1979 (D.E.S. 1979b). In the early 1980's the school had been one of the first in the L.E.A. to formulate an 'institutional policy on racism'. In its 1985/6 brochure for parents its commitment is made clear:

Milltown High is a multiracial school. We are developing policies to promote equal opportunities and equal esteem for all our students, girls and boys, black and white. It is very important to help everyone in our school community understand the causes of racism and sexism in our society, and the part we can play in fighting against them.

In short, in comparison with many other secondary schools, Milltown High appeared something of a pioneer in the area of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education. As such it was a favourable setting in which to investigate what those schools who espouse a commitment to Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education are actually doing. I am not arguing here that the school can be taken as representative of other such schools. More research would be necessary if that claim were to be established. However, a study of this school might give some detail as to what Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education looks like in practice and about the problems and pitfalls which occur when a school attempts

to innovate in this particular direction. The school also represents a 'critical case' in terms of the implementation of L.E.A. policies. If we do not find policy implemented here, where staff profess a commitment and claim to be putting it into practice, we would be unlikely to find it implemented elsewhere.

Another reason why a study of Milltown High is of interest is quite simply because it is a multi-ethnic school, and as was made woefully apparent by the publication of the Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Education of Children from Ethnic Minority Groups, the Swann Report (1985), shortly before this research began, very little is actually known about what goes on in such schools. They have remained a neglected area in educational research which seeks to inform policy making.

The research that is reported here is, therefore, a case study of one multi-ethnic, inner-city comprehensive school in Milltown which focuses on the interpretation and implementation of policy on Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education. It attempts to describe exactly what the school was doing under the auspices of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education. It examines the practices and procedures employed in the school and the ways in which the teachers have responded to the fact that the school is multi-ethnic in its intake, and seeks to scrutinise in-school processes and the way they affect students from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Footnotes

1) The gap between policy and practice and concentration of multicultural reform in a minority of schools has been noted and commented on by other authors and researchers (see for example Townsend and Brittan 1972, 1973, Little and Willey 1981, Tomlinson 1981, Cashmore and Bagley 1984). In 1984 Willey concluded that,

At the level of official policy significant changes have taken place in educational response to ethnic diversity. Initial assimilationist objectives have been replaced by pluralist aims. Early preoccupation with helping newcomers to adapt has widened into a consideration of the of the implications for the educational system as a whole of the presence of minority ethnic groups. But there has been much less progress in giving the altered objectives practical effect. Little concerted effort has been directed towards bringing about change, and a widening gap has opened up between stated policies and practice in most educational institutions. (p.13)

Chapter One

Introduction - Research Questions, Literature Review and Research Methods.

In a report submitted to the Swann Committee describing the work of the Education Team at the Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations (Rex, Troyna and Naguib 1983, see also Rex 1986a and b) John Rex suggested that one way of approaching the study of educational policy and practice in the area of race and ethnicity (1) is to consider the extent to which they meet certain key principles to which most of those who operate the educational system would formally subscribe. First equality of opportunity and second the preparation of students for a non-racist, multicultural society. Rex went on to formulate a list of criteria against which policy and practice could usefully be examined. In conducting this study I adopted a similar approach. I sought to clarify the principles, as I saw them, of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education and specify their implications for practice. My aim was to identify a model of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education with which the reality of policy and practice at Milltown High School could be compared. This enabled me to establish my main research questions and clarify the values underpinning them. This is the subject of the first part of this chapter. The clarification of these principles also raised several theoretical questions which the research addresses and which I will discuss in the following part of the chapter.

The Central Principles of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education

In my view there are two principles at the heart of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education. First is equality of opportunity and second is a notion of how we might use education to work towards the realisation of a non-racist society. It is around these two themes that I will focus my discussion.

Equal opportunities

The principle of equal opportunities has been at the heart of much educational research, debate and policy throughout this century (Silver 1973). However, the term is often used in different ways. Here I want to clarify its meaning and examine its importance to Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education.

In perhaps its weakest form equal opportunities in the field of education implies the elimination of laws or rules which bar the entry of particular groups or individuals to parts of the education system. In this sense, unlike say South

Africa, Britain has afforded equality of educational opportunity for some considerable time.

However, during the early years of this century there were increasing demands that the principle of equal opportunities be extended so that all children, no matter what the economic resources of their family, should enjoy equal chances of getting a secondary education, that is of going to grammar schools (Tawney 1931). Later, following the 1944 Education Act, which introduced a more meritocratic system of selection for grammar schools, there was continued concern about class inequalities in the chances of attending such schools (Floud, Halsey and Martin 1956, Jackson and Marsden 1962, Douglas 1964). In the 1960s class inequalities in participation in further and higher education (Crowther 1959, Robbins 1963) were also pointed out. More recently, with the development of comprehensive schools, concern has shifted to social processes occurring within schools and classrooms which seem to create class inequalities in access to educational provision (see for example Ford 1969, Ball 1981) and to inequalities in access experienced by women and ethnic minority groups.

In this stronger version society affords equal opportunities in education if all children, no matter what their social class, gender or race, enjoy an equal chance to enter the component parts of the educational system. This view has emphasised the elimination of practices which limit the access of students from certain groups and has underpinned many of the major educational reforms of this century such as the 1944 Education Act, the introduction of comprehensive schools and the expansion of higher education.

A third, more radical view of equal opportunities emerged in the post-war years. It became evident that students did not enter the educational system with equal resources and support. Many came from backgrounds which were educationally disadvantaged (Davie et al. 1972, Wedge and Prosser 1973) and so began the educational race from unequal positions. Thus even if access to provision within the educational system was made more equal, educational outcomes would still diverge widely. According to this view, as Silver (1973) pointed out, 'equality of opportunity could only have meaning if those who began with unequal chances had unequal support from the educational system.' In other words for equality of opportunity to become a reality it was necessary to compensate those who started at a disadvantage by positively favouring them in the educational system. Students who came from disadvantaged social backgrounds should have more resources, more teachers, and better schools than those who came from more

privileged backgrounds. All students should have, in Coleman's (1968) words, 'equality in those elements that are effective for learning'. The aim of equal opportunity thus became equal achievement between groups. As Halsey (1972) explained:

In this new interpretation a society affords equality of educational opportunity if the proportion of people from different social, economic or ethnic categories at all levels and in all types of education are more or less the same as the proportion in the population at large. In other words the goal should not be the liberal one of equality of access but equality of outcome for the median member of each identifiable non-educationally defined group....If not there has been injustice. (p.9)

This view of equal opportunities has also been central to a number of educational reforms. In the United States the Johnson government included the 'Head Start' programme as part of its 'War on Poverty', and in Britain, following the recommendations of the Plowden Report (1967), Educational Priority Areas were established.

Behind these views of equal opportunities is an essentially liberal principle which maintains that it is unjust for some individuals to enjoy a greater chance of success in society because of their sex, race or social background. It is argued that an important element of social justice is that all individuals should enjoy equal chances of success and that those with similar ability and motivation should be able to achieve similar social positions and rewards. In the words of Rawls (1972) the aim of equal opportunities is:

Assuming there is a distribution of natural talents, those who are of the same level of talent and ability, and have the same willingness to use them, should have the same prospects of success regardless of their initial place in the social system....In all sectors of society there should be equal prospects of culture and achievement for everyone similarly motivated and endowed. The expectations of those with the same abilities and aspirations should not be affected by their social class (quoted in Green 1988, p.17)

This aim, as Green (1988) points out, is essentially one of 'competitive equality of opportunity' in which individuals compete for desired social positions

or opportunities which are allocated fairly to those most competent to perform or use them, and all enjoy an equal chance to prepare for competition. Such a system, it is argued, recognises the inherent differences in the talents and abilities of individuals, and achieves a fair and just allocation of social positions and rewards. In addition it should ensure that the most talented are allocated to the 'functionally most important positions' (Davis and Moore 1945) which results in maximum efficiency and therefore ultimately benefits all in society.

Of course, this liberal, meritocratic principle of equal opportunities has been subject to considerable criticism. Michael Young (1958), in his satire 'The Rise of the Meritocracy', painted a bleak picture of a society in which only the most able occupy the top positions in the social hierarchy. It was an unequal, socially divided society characterised by polarised attitudes of social inferiority and superiority. Others (for example Schaar 1971) have pointed to the exaggerated inequality and inevitable elitism that they feel would result if the principle of equality of opportunity were fully applied. In such a society, it is maintained, the advantages of genetic endowment would merely replace those of social background, thus substituting one form of injustice for another. It has also been argued that the principle of equal opportunities can in effect buttress an unjust status quo by providing a seemingly just rationale for social division and inequality (see Bowles and Gintis 1976).

These criticisms have led some to argue that social justice requires equality in society rather than equal opportunities. Their aim has become not the achievement of equal social positions for those of equal ability, but the elimination of social hierarchies and the inequalities pertaining to different social positions. In short, an egalitarian society. In an article based on his 1978 Reith Lectures, Halsey (1978) outlines this view. He argues for an emphasis on 'equality' and 'fraternity' rather than the liberal policy of equality of opportunity. He explains that 'equality can never be attained through educational policies alone' (p.75), and suggests that a society committed to the principle of equality would make the 'necessary reforms for the equalisation of capital and income and the democratisation of participation in the work place and the community'. As a result 'the selective function of education for a hierarchy of occupational positions would be transformed into one of differentiation for a complex and fluid array of jobs having roughly equal material rewards.' Everyone would enjoy an equal right to education as a citizen and educational resources

would be distributed on 'the principle of positive discrimination directed against all arbitrary or accidental, and therefore unfair, disadvantages'.

In my view Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education does not necessarily require a commitment to equality in society (though some might argue that it does), but it certainly involves at least a commitment to work towards the radical view of equal opportunities in education outlined above. This would be a situation in which all students enjoy equal chances to maximise their educational potential. It would mean first that we should try to ensure that the education system is free from discriminatory practices which reduce the chances of educational success of certain students. And second that we should endeavor to provide all individuals with roughly similar educational resources across their school and non-school educational careers. This would mean providing additional resources in the educational system for those from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds.

However, there may be limitations on the extent to which equal opportunities in education can be achieved given the present organisation of society. Its realisation presents enormous practical problems. Equalising opportunities could, as Coleman (1973) pointed out, involve providing all students with the educational resources available to the most privileged, something he regarded as impossible. If not theoretically impossible this would be extremely difficult to do in practice. It would involve assessing the extent to which individuals or groups were educationally disadvantaged and devising schemes to allocate appropriate educational resources to them. The problems of defining and operationalising the concept of educational disadvantage are enormous. Disadvantage is often defined in socio-economic terms, and indicators such as income level and housing facilities are used. Whilst there clearly are links, a lack of material resources may not always be synonymous with educational disadvantage. Cultural resources may be more important. But the idea of cultural disadvantage raises a whole host of questions about which aspects of particular cultures disadvantage, to what extent and, perhaps most important, who is to decide. Further, the notion of cultural disadvantage, as Bernstein (1970) pointed out, can create the misleading and erroneous impression that the cultures of disadvantaged groups are inherently inferior. What form positive provision should take in order to be effective is also problematic. This issue was raised by research conducted in America in the 1960s (Coleman et al 1969) which questioned the extent to which educational provision could actually compensate for disadvantages of social background.

Moreover, some critics have also pointed out that providing equal opportunities in education means that the differential influences of social background should be minimised and this may clash with other important values. Taken to its extreme it would involve the enforced removal of children from their families and their education in state-run nurseries and boarding schools (Lloyd-Thomas 1977, Coleman 1974) which clearly runs counter to the belief in the family as the primary agent of socialisation and of parental responsibility for the child. Minimising background differences also conflicts with the idea of cultural pluralism in a culturally diverse society. If cultural differences are to be accepted, or even fostered as some versions of Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism imply, then it would seem to be undesirable to attempt to minimise background differences. This point raises one of the most serious dilemmas within Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education. To what extent should the aim be to ensure equal opportunities within an education system based on universalistic cultural forms and to what extent and in what ways should cultural diversity be respected and encouraged? The former requires the emphasis to be on the teaching of the skills, values and norms of mainstream society and by implication the minimisation of the influence of home background. The latter stresses the maintenance and teaching of the cultural forms of the child's home community (2). In my view the former should have priority in the education system and the role of this system must be to give students as far as is possible equal opportunities in terms of the universalistic values of society. But having said this, the rights of individuals and families to cultural difference should be respected, and this will inevitably place limitations on any programme designed to minimise the influence of social background.

Thus there are problems in achieving equal opportunities in education within society as it is currently organised. It is clearly impossible and maybe undesirable to totally remove the differential influences of social backgrounds. We must accept that in practice programmes of positive provision may have to be limited, based on crude and inadequate criteria and will be unable to identify and reach all those who are educationally disadvantaged. But, as Green (1988) points out, 'there is every reason to pursue a just goal which can (only) partially be fulfilled'.

How do these ideas relate to the principles of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education? I have argued that equal opportunities in education are an essential aspect of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education. This would specifically require

first, eliminating from the educational system any practices which are racist or which indirectly restrict the chances of success of members of particular racial or ethnic groups. It would also involve offering additional resources within the education system in order to compensate children who are educationally disadvantaged by virtue of their membership of particular racial or ethnic groups, the aim being to equalise the educational resources available to students across their school and non-school educational careers.

It is important at the outset to clarify what I mean by racism. It is, of course, a much defined concept. It is used in many different ways in both sociological and everyday discourse and this frequently results in confusion. Rex (1970) draws the distinction between 'racism' and 'racialism'. The former refers to a 'deterministic belief system' which maintains that characteristics, which are regarded as morally, culturally or intellectually inferior, can be attributed to certain groups of people defined in terms of their 'race'. The latter is the discriminatory and inferior treatment which is based on or legitimated by racist beliefs. I intend to adopt a more general use of the term 'racism' which subsumes both belief and practice. I will use it to refer to practices which restrict the chances of success of individuals from a particular racial or ethnic group, and which are based on, or legitimated by, some form of belief that this racial or ethnic group is inherently morally, culturally or intellectually inferior.

Such beliefs could obviously be held by any individual in the education system - education officers, teachers, students, ancilliary staff, parents, governors, etc.. Teachers might, for example, regard students from a particular racial or ethnic groups as inherently less intelligent or less academically able, or might view a particular group's culture or cultural practices generally as inferior (3). These beliefs could be expressed openly by the teacher in interaction with others. When held by a group they are likely to be strengthened and form part of a common working perspective (4). Or, of course, they might be kept private and unarticulated, existing only within the individual's personal consciousness. As much social behaviour is non-reflective even here the individual may only be partially aware of their existence.

More important though to equal opportunities are the actions that may be based upon such ideas. If such views form the basis for inferior treatment of students from a particular racial or ethnic group then this would clearly be racism. How might this happen? Again it is possible that differential treatment could occur across the educational system - if for example the schools attended

by ethnic minority students were allocated poorer resources on the basis of racist beliefs - but I want to use the example of in-school practices as my study concentrated on this area. As teachers are frequently in the role of evaluating and making decisions about the educational treatment of their students then racism is clearly a possibility in school practices. Teachers subscribing to racist beliefs might make overt references to the inferiority of certain cultures in the classroom which might damage the self-esteem and thus the motivation of students belonging to that ethnic group. Teachers might also evaluate such students less highly in the academic and social status system of the classroom because of characteristics attributed to their racial or ethnic group. This might result in their inferior treatment in the classroom, which could involve, for example, giving them less attention than white students, less praise, less physical contact, or indeed, less of any of the personal and material resources that teachers have the power to distribute. When making more formal decisions about the distribution of opportunities within the school, for example about allocation to streams, bands or sets and examination entries, teachers could clearly make racist judgements. For example, Afro/Caribbean students if seen as inherently 'less able' and 'more disruptive' might be allocated disproportionately to the lower bands or streams or to 'units for difficult pupils', where they are likely to receive inferior treatment. Teachers are also in the position to make decisions about what is included in the school curriculum. Those motivated by racist beliefs would be unlikely to include references to the cultural practices or history of groups they felt were inferior, or they might include derogatory references. This again might disadvantage students from these ethnic groups as their educational motivation could be weakened (5).

Racism might also affect ethnic minority teachers. Racism in the labour market has frequently been identified. It is possible that there are also discriminatory practices in initial appointments and promotion in the teaching profession.

There may also be practices in the education system which more indirectly restrict the chances of success of students from particular racial or ethnic groups (6). For example in the system as a whole it may be that the schools attended by students from particular ethnic groups are for some reason poorer or less effective than other schools (c.f. Plowden Report 1967). Or it might be that such schools teach an inferior curriculum depriving students of access to important knowledge and skills. Such a criticism has been leveled, ironically, at

some proponents of Multicultural Education (by for example Stone 1981). It has been suggested that the attempts of Multiculturalists and others to foster the cultures of minority groups in the school curriculum serve to deprive the students of such groups of full access to mainstream culture and a curriculum which will permit them to compete on a par with indigenous students. I am not at all convinced that this is actually the case in schools which practice Multicultural Education, but one can see that this could be a possibility if schools taught a minority culture at the expense of mainstream culture.

Examples of within-school practices that might indirectly disadvantage students from particular racial or ethnic groups might be disciplinary or uniform regulations which make no concessions to cultural or religious customs and which therefore in effect bar certain ethnic groups from entry, curriculum form and content which make no reference to the cultural practices, beliefs, language and histories of certain ethnic groups, school meals which take no account of the requirements of different ethnic groups, assemblies which pay no attention to the religions of students attending the school, and communication with families which takes no account of language differences.

Methods of assessment and evaluation which are culturally biased or inaccurate (7) and therefore result in unequal opportunities or inappropriate educational treatment would also be examples. Of course it could be argued that much assessment that occurs in working class schools is 'culturally biased' in that teachers evaluate their students on the basis of their ability to display competence in the cultural forms of the dominant groups in our society (Bourdieu 1974), but my meaning of cultural bias is somewhat narrower than this. In a differentiated society there must inevitably be assessment criteria and these will ultimately derive from certain values and a conception of the qualities required to perform particular social roles or use particular opportunities. Thus some degree of cultural bias in the broad sense implied by Bourdieu is perhaps inevitable. What I mean by the term is when assessment or evaluation procedures include requirements to display qualities, skills or knowledge which are irrelevant to the position or opportunity being competed for and which certain racial or ethnic groups would not normally have access to. One instance might be a test which assumed knowledge of cultural practices which members of a particular ethnic group would not be familiar with and which was irrelevant to the skills being tested. Another might be when details of culturally different family patterns or practices were used as information in making educational

judgements. As evaluation is frequently based on conformity to norms of behaviour another instance of cultural bias might be unnecessary disciplinary rules which effectively made the cultural norms of a particular ethnic group deviant. It is important to emphasise here that I am not advocating assessment and evaluation practices that are biased in favour of ethnic minority students. What I am advocating is that these processes should be based on universalistic criteria which are the same for all students, and that every effort should be made to ensure that such criteria are always relevant and necessary and therefore do not indirectly discriminate against students of particular ethnic groups.

Something else which might indirectly disadvantage might be a lack of specific school policies and practices to deal promptly and effectively with incidents of racism, racial abuse and violence. As a recent Commission for Racial Equality report (CRE 1988) made clear if students are not educated in an environment free from racial harassment and violence then they will not enjoy equal opportunities. A lack of knowledge amongst staff of the cultural backgrounds of their students so that they are unable to deal sensitively and effectively with them and their parents, would also indirectly disadvantage. Similarly if teachers make no special efforts to communicate or consult with the parents of ethnic minority students then they may be placed at a disadvantage given the language and cultural differences which frequently exist between minority parents and school.

Again it is also possible that the careers of ethnic minority teachers may be disadvantaged indirectly by practices within the educational system. As with procedures used to assess students it is possible that culturally biased and irrelevant criteria may be established for particular teaching posts thus lessening minority teachers' chances of appointment and promotion. The methods used to attract applicants may also indirectly disadvantage. If, for example, posts were advertised by word of mouth and only became known to the friends of current teachers who of course are disproportionately white (Ranger 1988).

It is important to emphasise at this point that inequality of educational outcome between racial or ethnic groups is not necessarily an indicator of racism or practices which disadvantage racial or ethnic groups within the education system (8). It does not follow that if students from one ethnic group perform less well than those from another in some particular educational field that one or more of the practices described above is in operation. To establish this would require investigation of the actual processes involved. Inequalities of outcome are

the result of many complex factors, some of which will relate to material and cultural disadvantages of home background. It is this aspect of equal opportunities that I want to turn to now.

As well as ensuring that the type of practices mentioned above do not occur equal opportunities would also involve, I have suggested, some element of compensation in the education system for the educational disadvantages suffered by children as a result of their membership of particular racial or ethnic groups. However, the problem with this idea is that it is very difficult to decide whether children from a particular racial or ethnic group are educationally disadvantaged, and if so in what way or to what extent. This makes it very difficult to specify ideally what positive provision for such groups should look like. In fact it is possible at present for LEAs to provide some additional provision through Section 11 of the 1966 Local Government Act to 'meet the needs of Commonwealth immigrants' and their children, but these needs have rarely been clearly assessed or identified.

One might argue that particular racial and ethnic groups are economically disadvantaged (Smith 1977, Rex and Tomlinson 1979, Brown 1984), and therefore less able to provide adequate extra-school educational resources for their children. As a result, their children are likely to be educationally disadvantaged and additional educational resources should be allocated to them. But whilst particular racial or ethnic groups may suffer higher levels of economic disadvantage as a result of racial discrimination, economic disadvantage is not confined to particular racial or ethnic groups. Thus it is difficult to see how positive provision specifically to such groups could be justified. More sensible would be a scheme to allocate positive provision to all those suffering from economic disadvantages. In other words positive provision on the basis of socio-economic class rather than racial or ethnic group.

There is perhaps only one clear way in which members of racial and ethnic groups are disadvantaged and therefore where positive provision directed specifically to them is justifiable. This is in the area of language. Common sense would lead us to conclude that if a child's first and home language is not English, as is the case with many ethnic minority children, then he/she is likely to be at a disadvantage in an educational system in which English is the dominant language (9). There is a case to be made here for additional provision for such students to enable them to develop English skills comparable to their white peers so that they are able to compete on equal terms. As Rex (Rex, Troyna and Naguib

1983) pointed out this provision should aim to provide adequately for both first stage i.e. the introduction to English as a second language, and second stage i.e. English skills beyond the introductory stage, language instruction. Moreover, such additional provision should not, whilst providing needed language skills, disadvantage in other ways, as sometimes appears to happen when ethnic minority students are placed in special language units where they do not have access to a full school curriculum. Further, the aim should not be the elimination of the child's mother-tongue as this may damage self-esteem and bi-lingualism is, for most children, a positive asset. Problems do arise, however, with the definition of 'first language other than English'. Clearly a child who speaks Vietnamese or Urdu as a first language would come under this heading, but does an Afro/Caribbean child who speaks a creole at home? I would suggest that they do and that they may also have language disadvantages and needs (Trudgill 1975, Edwards 1979) which, of course, may be more of the second stage variety. Thus one might argue justifiably for a programme of positive provision to compensate students from particular racial or ethnic groups for language disadvantages, but other positive provision, I would maintain, should be based on criteria other than racial or ethnic group.

I have argued that one of the central principles of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education is equal opportunities and I have tried to specify the implications of this principle for educational practice in the area of race and ethnicity. My aim has been to develop a model of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education against which I can compare the practices at Milltown High School. One of my basic research questions in examining the implementation of policies on Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education therefore was: to what extent did practices within the school resemble the ideal of equal opportunities I have outlined? This involved finding out whether there were racist practices or practices which indirectly disadvantaged members of particular racial or ethnic groups in the school, and whether the school provided additional or compensatory provision for students from particular racial or ethnic groups.

Education for a non-racist society

The second major principle of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education which I want to discuss is education in preparation for a non-racist society. Again I felt it was important to clarify my views on what such an education might look like in order to establish a model with which I could compare the practices of teachers at Milltown High School.

Much of the debate between advocates of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education has concerned the most appropriate educational strategies to be employed in working for a non-racist society. Multiculturalists aim to eliminate racism by teaching all children about the cultures and histories of ethnic minorities and projecting a more positive image of these groups in the school curriculum. They suggest that racism is mainly the product of ignorance which is the result of faulty or inadequate socialisation. This approach was adopted by the Swann Committee (Committee of Inquiry 1985). They defined racism in terms of 'prejudice' and argued that:

There seem to be two factors which are essential for prejudices initially to be formed, subsequently maintained and even reinforced. Firstly, ignorance, in the literal sense of lack of knowledge on which to base informed opinions and judgements, and secondly, the existence and promulgation of stereotypes of particular groups of people as conveyed by the major informers of public opinion most notably the media and the education process. (p12)

Their emphasis was therefore on changing the process of socialisation in schools so that students would be taught a more accurate view of ethnic minority people and as a result hold informed, by implication non-racist, views and opinions.

Multicultural Education, however, appears to rest on several, rather shaky premises (Bullivant 1981). One is that teachers can actually teach a more accurate version of ethnic minority culture and history than they do at the moment. This they may be able to do, but it will surely require large scale teacher education before they could do it adequately. Others might question the ability of a largely white indigenous teaching profession to do

this without seriously diluting and misinterpreting ethnic minority culture and history, or question the extent to which valid conceptions of minority cultures can be transmitted in an already overcrowded school curriculum. There appears a real danger that such an approach might become a rather superficial form of cultural tourism. Another assumption is that students taught such information will passively consume it and become less prejudiced as a result. This may be the outcome of such teaching and one would hope that it is, but it may also be a possibility that students will selectively interpret the information and use it to support their own racism.

Proponents of Multicultural Education also tend to imply that racism is merely a product of errors in the socialisation process. John Rex (1986) makes the point that there is a tendency to see racism as solely a problem of attitudes, beliefs and doctrines. For example, the extermination of several million Jews in Nazi Germany is seen often seen as the result of the racism of Nazi leaders and party members. Whilst this is clearly true at one level, it tends to leave out the important question of what it was about German society which made the development and dominance of such ideas likely. Rex maintains that explanations of racism should include reference to individual attitudes and belief systems, but of central importance is also the study and analysis of the social structure of a society. In the case of Nazi Germany this would involve examining 'whether there were strains in the German social structure which made the occurrence of scapegoating likely, and whether the social and economic position of the Jews as well as their distinctive appearance made them suitable candidates for scapegoating as a group' (p104). Similarly in studying South African society it would be important to go beyond a consideration of the doctrine of apartheid and the racism of South African nationalists to include an examination of the system of production, white exploitation of black labour and the social structure which derived from this.

Stuart Hall (1980) made a similar point in an address concerning teaching about racism to the Association of Teachers of Social Science.

There is a liberal common sense way of approaching the topic which fastens on to questions of discriminatory attitudes between people from different ethnic populations, prejudicial actions, beliefs and opinions, etc. One tendency in teaching is to take these immediate surface

manifestations of the problem at face value and to look at how these prejudices arise through a kind of attitudinal or social psychological perspective. There is a second strategy which says all of this is mere surface appearance and we must go to the structures which generate particular kinds of attitudes. I tend to favour the second of these alternatives.

We have to uncover for ourselves, in our own understanding, as well as for the students we are teaching, the deep structural factors which have a tendency persistently not only to generate racial practices and structures but to reproduce them through time; and which therefore account for their extraordinarily immovable character. (p.5)

I have a lot of sympathy with these criticisms of Multicultural Education. Teaching about the variety of human cultures and about the different ethnic minority cultures in Britain is important, but I believe that if education is to be effective in helping to work toward a non-racist society it must not do only this. It should attempt to be more directly Anti-Racist. What would this involve?

Anti-Racist Education should first of all ensure that where information about other cultures and ethnic minority groups is included in the school curriculum it does not degenerate into oversimplified caricature. It should also pay attention to the way in which such information is received and interpreted by students. In fact a consideration of this issue and the broader ones of how racist attitudes are formed and influence social relationships, and the mechanisms of interpersonal perception and interaction, are of crucial importance. These topics could be raised in a number of subject areas and at different levels of complexity during a student's educational career - from simple ideas about, for example, how individuals respond to strangers or newcomers in the early years of secondary school to the more abstract sociological notions of human interaction in the later years - and ought to form a major part of a school's programme of social education (10). They are also likely to arise more informally from inter-student relationships which, unfortunately, can sometimes be fraught with racial animosity and tension. The pastoral care and advice given to students therefore should attempt to foster the values of Anti-Racism. The aim must be to encourage non-racist attitudes and behaviour by giving students the knowledge, understanding and skills to

be able to critically assess the information they receive, to examine their own responses to such information, and to reflect critically on their own and others' attitudes and social behaviour. It is also important that teachers in their interaction with students, parents and colleagues set appropriate Anti-Racist role models for their students

Whilst not wishing to discount the importance of individual attitudes (11), it is also important to consider with students the social structural factors which help to create and recreate racism, in Britain and in other societies. Anti-Racist Education should also aim to equip students with a critical awareness of the ways in which societies are structured and organised and the role of ideologies and belief systems. It should raise questions about why societies are organised in the way they are and the justice or morality of such forms of organisation. More specifically, it should involve a consideration of the way in which racism figures in Britain and other societies, past and present, and of how racism is transmitted, reproduced, reworked and can be resisted. Such teaching could not be conducted in an isolated or minor curriculum slot, but ought to become a central part of a comprehensive programme of social and political education.

What form might such a programme take? Its major aim would be to provide students with a broad knowledge of social and political issues and relationships and the skills and qualities which would enable them to analyse, understand, participate in and possibly change the society in which they live. Well developed literacy skills are clearly important, as are oral, listening, research, organisational and cooperative skills. Also important is the development of commitments to democratic values such as the importance of free debate and discussion, rational argument, the use of evidence and respect for the opinions of others. Such aims involve a commitment to a particular curriculum content and pedagogy. A curriculum which contains a strong element of social and political education would include wherever possible teaching about social and political issues, one of which will be racism. Obviously such teaching is most likely to be found in the 'Humanities' areas, in subjects like History, Geography, Social Studies, and English, but it can also be incorporated into subjects like the Sciences, through for example teaching about the social and political implications of scientific developments, and Mathematics, where, for example, the use and meaning of certain types of statistics could be discussed.

However, as Whitty (1985, see also Gleeson and Whitty 1976) points out, often where social and political education has been taught it has derived from the 'education for citizenship' tradition. Its aim has been to buttress the status quo by socialising young people into established ways of thinking and proceeding. As a result the content of social and political education has frequently presented a favourable and uncritical view of current social relationships and organisation. Social and political conflict, inequality, and injustice have often been underplayed and society portrayed as a healthy, consensual union. This would not be the form of social and political education that I would advocate. Merely encouraging students to accept and fit in to society as it is at present organised is unlikely to give them the knowledge or the skills to work toward the creation of a more just, non-racist society.

Students should be encouraged to examine a variety of different viewpoints including those which are critical of the society they live in and which present alternative forms of social organisation and ways in which established systems might be changed. Social and political education would require approaching the study of often controversial social and political issues from a variety of perspectives, from the conservative to the radical. This would involve the study of established systems and the ideas which support them as well as the consideration of alternative systems and ideas which are critical of the status quo. It could also involve a strong element of what others (for example Hargreaves 1982) have called 'community studies', so that students could develop their understanding through a study of issues which affect them and their own families. This would also give them the chance to learn about the contemporary experiences and concerns of local ethnic minority groups in the context of those of the wider community.

At time of writing the Conservative Government is proposing to introduce a national curriculum for all secondary schools which may severely restrict the introduction of social and political education. Indeed, it has been argued that the Government's proposals are specifically designed to prevent what is perceived as an attempt by Anti-Racists and others to 'politicise' the school curriculum. It remains to be seen what form the proposed national curriculum will take. There may, however, be space within such a framework for teachers and others to introduce particular content along the lines that are suggested here.

The type of social and political education I have in mind would also involve a particular form of pedagogy. I would argue that in order to develop the skills mentioned above students need to experience situations in which they are actively involved in discussion and debate, in which they can utilize their own knowledge and experiences (c.f. Barnes 1976) and in which they are encouraged to reflect upon their own ideas and attitudes. It would mean employing teaching styles which emphasise collaboration and group discussion rather than didactic transmission and individualistic task performance, and more egalitarian rather than authoritarian teacher-student relationships (c.f. Troyna 1987a). Such styles would also encourage tolerance and respect between students which is essential in order to establish a climate of Anti-Racism in the classroom. This also implies that students be involved as much as possible in the wider school decision-making structure so that they may experience and learn about the nature of democratic organisation at first hand.

Thus Anti-Racist Education in this broader form involves a conception of what and how we want students to learn. This derives from a view of the particular qualities we want students to develop in order that they become non-racist themselves and are equipped to be able to work for a just, non-racist society based on the principles of equal opportunities, non-racism, and democracy. In this sense Anti-Racist Education does have a 'political' aim and basis. It seeks to produce people with certain kinds of knowledge, skills and attitudes who are committed to a particular kind of society, and it derives from particular 'political' beliefs and values. In fact all decisions about what and how to teach are based on ideas of this kind, although they often remain implicit. This does not mean that Anti-Racist Education should, as some (for example Jeffcoate 1984a+b) have claimed it does, attempt to 'indoctrinate' students by presenting them with a single, narrowly prescriptive political view of the world or of the nature of a non-racist society. Such an aim would contradict the commitment to the type of curriculum and pedagogy outlined above which emphasises debate and discussion and in fact encourages students to consider a variety of arguments and perspectives. But it does mean that decisions about what and how to teach are based on certain values and beliefs about the nature of a just and good society. It also suggests that these values and beliefs will consciously be fostered and therefore others will be regarded less valid. These values place limits, albeit broad ones in a

democratic society, on what can be regarded as legitimate opinion. Thus teachers could not be expected, as Jeffcoate (1984a+b) appears to imply, to accept racist views as valid and legitimate in the classroom in the interests of 'balance' (just as they could not accept anti-democratic views). There is, of course, sometimes a very narrow and difficult line to draw between racist views and legitimate political opinion, and teachers must exercise careful judgement here.

This then is the model of education for a non-racist society that I wish to employ in examining the teaching practices at Milltown High School. One of my main research aims was to discover to what extent the conception of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education held by the teachers at Milltown High matched my own and thus to assess the extent to which practices in the school resembled the sort of model that I have drawn. I was thus interested in the nature of social, political and community education in the school, curriculum and pedagogy in such areas and the extent to which students were involved in school decision making.

A summary of the main research questions

In my view the key principles of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education are thus equal opportunities and education for a non-racist society and I have outlined the value basis of these principles.

It should be apparent from this discussion that my views are informed by both Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism. Indeed I am broadly in agreement with Andy Green (1982) and Robin Grinter (1985) who argue that Anti-Racism includes many of the basic characteristics of Multiculturalism, and that given the fact that a radical change in the basic structural features of British society appears rather distant the most appropriate educational strategy in working for a non-racist society is what Grinter (after Hatcher and Shallice 1984) calls 'warrenism'. That is, working with the existing school system to produce confident, highly educated, politically aware and anti-racist young people who are educated rather than 'schooled', and at the same time seeking to ensure equality of opportunity for all. As Green points out this inevitably places radical teachers, and I include myself in this category, in a contradictory situation:

Teaching against racism whilst agents of an institutional system that in many ways perpetuates it, sympathising with the resentment of black kids whilst simultaneously called upon to contain their rebellion, paid to school and desiring to educate; the contradictions are endless. Purists can denounce them; they will remain uncontaminated and ineffective. Teachers and activists have to work with them and through them. Contradiction is the essence of social change, and the occupational hazard of political action.

My research questions inevitably stemmed from these central principles. The main questions I addressed were - How did the staff at Milltown High School interpret and implement a policy on Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education? To what extent did their views correspond to the ones I have outlined above? If they did, how far had they gone in converting the principles of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education into practice? If they did not, then what were their views and how did they relate to practice? And what were the constraints on the introduction of this type of school reform?

These questions have considerable importance for Multicultural and Anti-Racist policy and for those teachers and educationalists who are attempting to move in this direction. It is hoped that this study, which describes the activities of teachers in one school, will provide a body of experience which can be used to guide others, and also provide L.E.A. policy makers in Milltown and elsewhere, who are often seen as remote from the 'real world' of the school, with information about the effect of their policies on day-to-day practice in schools and the constraints and difficulties which teachers face in translating policy into practice at the chalk face.

Theoretical Issues

The questions I have outlined also relate to issues of more theoretical concern. Of central interest in the sociology of education has been the question of how educational outcomes i.e. academic attainment, value orientation and attitudes, are produced, and thus of how the educational system contributes to the reproduction of the basic social characteristics of industrial capitalist societies.

A number of writers have focused on the significance of broader structural or 'macro' factors, seeing these as largely determining the nature and product of the education system. This type of analysis has been common in Marxist approaches. Bowles and Gintis (1976), for example, argue that the form of the education system is determined by the mode of production in capitalist societies, and that in turn the education system operates to reproduce appropriately socialised labour power for particular positions in the capitalist economic hierarchy. They suggest that there is a close 'correspondence' between the social relationships of production and the social relationships characteristic of educational institutions. Through what has been termed the 'hidden curriculum' of school, students learn the basic attitudes and dispositions which are necessary in capitalist organisations - motivation by extrinsic rewards, obedience, discipline, and an acceptance of unequal, hierarchical and autocratic social relationships. Moreover, they argue that the notion that educational attainment and adult status is a product of individual ability and effort is largely a myth. In fact, social class origin is by far the most important determinant of educational qualifications and post-school success. The education system, they maintain, reproduces the basic structural inequalities of capitalist society. At the same time it makes them appear fair and inevitable, thus performing an important ideological function.

The French Marxist Louis Althusser (1971) also points to the role of the education system in social reproduction. As part of the superstructure of capitalist society the education system, whilst having a degree of autonomy, is mainly a product of the economic base. At the same time, according to Althusser, the education system is one of the key 'Ideological state apparatuses' and performs a crucial function in helping to reproduce the social relations of production of capitalist society. Its job is to produce labour

power with the skills and consciousness suitable to future positions in the capitalist class system. Of central importance to his theory is the concept of 'ideology'. This refers to the all encompassing system of ideas and assumptions which are embedded in individuals' thought processes and provide the 'cement' (Hammersley 1983) holding society together and adjusting people to their social roles. Schools, Althusser claims, are major transmitters of this ideology. Through their overt and hidden curriculum they pass on to children from different social backgrounds the 'ideological predispositions', as well as the knowledge and skills, appropriate for their future roles.

Pierre Bourdieu (1973), has also argued that the outcomes of the education system largely derive from broad social structural arrangements. Bourdieu argues that the cultural forms prevalent in the educational systems of capitalist societies are those of the dominant classes. These groups, through their representatives in schools i.e. teachers, have the power to define what is regarded as worthwhile knowledge, skill and ability, and therefore to define which individuals are considered knowledgeable, skilled and able. As the majority of working class students lack the 'cultural capital' to enable them to conform to these definitions they are likely to be seen as failures. In this sense the cultural biases of teachers and educationalists produce differential educational performance and serve to reproduce social inequality.

Many other writers have also stressed the significance of structural factors in explaining differential educational achievement. In Britain a number of empirical studies have emphasised the significance of material inequality (Wedge and Prosser 1973, Wedge and Essen 1982) and social class variation in parental attitudes and values (Jackson and Marsden 1962, Douglas 1964, Plowden Report 1967, Sugarman 1970). The work of Basil Bernstein (1973) has drawn attention to differences in social class language 'codes' and their effect on educational performance. In France Raymond Boudon (1974) has developed what he terms 'positional theory' to account for social class inequality in education (see also Halsey, Heath and Ridge 1980). He argues that social class differences in attitudes and values constitute the 'primary effects' of stratification on educational opportunity. However, more important, he maintains, are the 'secondary effects'. These involve the different financial and social costs and benefits of continuing and being successful in education to individuals from different social class groups. At each 'branching point' in students' educational careers i.e. times when the student or his/her parents

have to make decisions about future education, the cost to a working class student and their family of continuing in education or beginning a high status course will tend to outweigh the possible benefits. The reverse is likely to be true of the middle class student. There are social class inequalities of opportunity at each point, which, become cumulative as the student moves through the system.

However, some writers have suggested that schools themselves may have effects which are independent of these macro-factors; that what goes on within schools and the outcomes of schooling are not simply a product of wider structural forces. In-school processes (and it is these processes that my study is mainly concerned with) may, it seems, mediate the educational effects of structural factors. It is possible that the significance of such external factors may be reduced (see Lacey 1966), but more often it appears that they accentuate differences between students deriving from external social factors. In-school processes seem to frequently place greater obstacles in the path of those who enter the educational system already disadvantaged.

In considering within-school processes three main theories have been developed. The first derives partly from the 'cultural' Marxism of Bourdieu (1973) outlined above which played a central role in what came to be known in the 1970s as the 'new sociology of education' (Young 1971). From this viewpoint of critical importance in schools are the processes through which particular forms of knowledge, skill and ability are defined as desirable, and the ways particular individuals come to be seen as more or less successful in terms of these definitions. In other words, the ways in which dominant cultural forms influence conceptions of knowledge and ability at the school level and in turn affect how teachers interact with their students and identify 'cultural capital' in the classroom.

Whilst these ideas originate in the main from Marxism they have links with two other, inter-related theories which derive from more interpretivist approaches in sociology. First is the idea of the self-fulfilling prophesy, which was first systematically expounded by Merton (1949), and has subsequently been developed in symbolic interactionist approaches to educational research (see D. Hargreaves 1975 for a review). In education this theory has claimed that a teacher's initial perception of a student influences their expectations of the student's future progress. This expectation may cause them to treat the student in a particular way. This treatment can either

directly bring about the predicted student progress (or lack of it) or it can influence the student's conception of their own ability, which affects motivation, and thus ultimately brings the student's progress into line with the teacher's original expectations.

Most research on this theory has been conducted in America (Rosenthal and Jacobson 1968, Rist 1973, Brophy and Good 1974) whilst in Britain another theory has developed. This theory is mainly associated with the work of David Hargreaves (1967), Colin Lacey (1970) and Stephen Ball (1981) and has concentrated on the link between what has been termed 'differentiation' and 'polarisation'. The former term refers to the ways teachers evaluate their students in terms of the dominant value system of the school at the informal classroom level and at the formal school level through the school's system of ability grouping. The latter term describes the student adaptations and sub-cultures that are produced in reaction to differentiation. The theory argues that differentiation, which in schools is generally based on academic achievement and behavioural conformity, tends to result in the polarisation of student attitudes. Those students who are successful in terms of the school's academic and behavioural values and are, as a result, given high status, by for example being allocated to the top streams, will become positively orientated to school and what it stands for. More especially those who are not successful and are given low status will tend to reject school and its values (Hammersley 1985).

Hargreaves, Lacey and Ball suggest that such processes tend to amplify the effects of existing class inequalities in educational resources in ways similar to those outlined in the theory of the self-fulfilling prophesy. Once differentiated, students are categorised. They become D-stream or C-band students, for example, and disproportionate numbers of working class students are allocated to such low status groups. These categories become the basis for the allocation of educational resources, and for teacher expectations and behaviour. Often low status groups receive inferior resources, such as the least experienced teachers, and teachers approach them with low expectations and treat them accordingly, for example by setting them less demanding work or accepting lower standards. Moreover, once categorised, students tend to take to themselves the attitudes and expectations held by their teachers and signified by their position in the school status system. Thus the D-stream and C-band students tend to think of themselves as failures and their academic

motivation is further reduced. As a result low status students, who are more often than not working class, are even less likely to succeed.

These theories appear to demonstrate some of the possible ways that within-school processes can create or amplify educational inequalities and disadvantage working class students. Versions of them, especially the idea of the self-fulfilling prophesy, have been applied recently to the area of race and ethnicity where there has been growing concern about the educational underachievement of students from certain ethnic minority groups, most notably Afro/Caribbean students (12). In explaining this phenomenon increasing prominence has been given to the role played by processes occurring within individual schools.

It has been suggested that certain teachers have unfavourable views of Afro/Caribbean students and perceive them in a negative light. In the Swann Report (Committee of Inquiry 1985), it was suggested that such views could be 'intentional' or 'unintentional', but were more likely to be the latter. The Committee explained that:

A well intentioned and apparently sympathetic person may, as a result of his education, experiences or environment, have negative, patronising or stereotyped views about ethnic minority groups which may subconsciously affect his attitude and behaviour towards members of those groups.(p.9)

The Committee concluded that such views were likely to influence the academic performance of Afro/Caribbean students:

...we find ourselves all the more convinced of the major role which the particular expectations and attitudes which many teachers have, not only of West Indian pupils, but indeed of pupils from the whole range of ethnic minority groups, can and do play in the educational experience and perhaps the academic achievement of these pupils....research findings and our own evidence have indicated that the stereotypes that teachers tend to have of West Indian children are often related to a particular and generally negative, expectation of academic performance.(p.25)

As a consequence of such negative perceptions it is argued that Afro/Caribbean students are likely to be treated less favourably than their

white peers in the classroom, receiving less and poorer physical and human resources, and less demanding work. They are more likely to be categorised as low status, problem students and allocated to low streams and bands, or to ESN schools or units for disruptive children, where they experience an inferior curriculum and low, inappropriate expectations. They are more likely to be suspended or referred to child guidance units, thus missing vital school time. It is suggested that such differential treatment may in itself create the underachievement of many Afro-Caribbean students. Alternatively it is argued that such treatment affects the academic self-image of students who come to view themselves as 'failures' thus losing motivation, becoming progressively more alienated from the educational system and hostile to their teachers, and developing polarised anti-school sub-cultures. This in turn leads to underachievement.

A variation on this theory is the notion that curriculum content and school ethos are largely mono-cultural. This implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) denigrates or systematically ignores ethnic minority cultures and achievements, conveying a subtle message of inferiority. As a result many ethnic minority students become alienated from school and their teachers. Again, it is argued, this leads to poor self-image, low motivation, poor teacher-student relationships and thus underachievement. Bhikhu Parekh (1986) neatly summarises both these theories:

Like the white children, some white teachers have grown up on a mono-cultural diet and share their cultural arrogance and insensitivity. Consciously or unconsciously they approach their black pupils with the familiar stereotypes; they expect little of them, tend not to stretch them to their fullest, and fail to provide them with necessary educational and emotional support and encouragement. Not surprisingly many black children tend to underachieve, rarely feel relaxed in school, lack trust in their teachers and go through the school with a cartload of frustrations and resentment. When constantly fed on an ethnocentric curriculum that presents their communities and cultures in a highly biased and unflattering manner, black children can hardly avoid developing a deep sense of inferiority and worthlessness....The black child raised on a mono-cultural diet in an English school experiences profound self-alienation.

(p25)

Another idea, less frequently advanced, was put forward by Driver (1979) following his ethnographic study of a multi-ethnic secondary school. He suggested that white teachers lacked cultural competence in their interaction with Afro/Caribbean students. They tended to misinterpret Afro/Caribbean cultural expression in the classroom and found it difficult to deal confidently with these students. As a result, Afro/Caribbean boys especially tended to become alienated from school and underachieve.

It is also possible to apply Bourdieu's ideas to the education of ethnic minority students. It could be argued that definitions of knowledge and ability dominant in schools make little reference to the cultural forms of minority groups, who are of course mainly working class, and there is therefore little likelihood that minority students will be able to display the sort of 'cultural capital' that is required in order to be seen as successful. It is not surprising, then, that they are found disproportionately amongst the failures of the educational system.

Unfortunately there is very little empirical evidence at present to allow us to judge the validity of these ideas. In fact there has been very little research work done at all on the ways in which in-school processes affect ethnic minority students. In investigating practices that relate to equal opportunities at Milltown High School I was interested in the extent to which some of the processes outlined above occurred and thus in whether school processes contributed to racial/ethnic inequalities in performance and consequently in life chances. It was not possible, because of resource constraints, to investigate every aspect of these processes, but I was able to examine questions such as: how did teachers' conceptions of knowledge and ability relate to minority cultural forms, how did teachers perceive their students and how did students' race or ethnicity influence these perceptions, how did teachers interpret and respond to cultural variations in student behaviour, how did teachers differentiate their students informally at the classroom level and did this relate to race and ethnicity, and did teachers treat students differently on the basis of race or ethnicity in the classroom? At the more formal level, did race or ethnicity influence decisions teachers made about students, such as in the allocations to ability bands or sets, were ethnic minority students disproportionately allocated to low status groups and receiving inferior educational treatment as a result, and were anti-school minority group sub-cultures produced? Thus this study provides empirical data

on some aspects of in-school processes in a multi-ethnic school which should help us to decide whether such processes do accentuate racial and ethnic inequalities.

The study also relates to an aspect of the 'macro' theories discussed above. Writers such as Bowles and Gintis, and Althusser argue that schools for the working class, through their formal and hidden curriculum, produce appropriately socialised workers (13), trained to fit in with, and accept unquestioningly, an unequal, exploitative and oppressive capitalist system (14). I have argued elsewhere (Foster 1985) that one might expect the curriculum of schools performing this function to present:

A generally uncritical picture of the social world. Established social structures, institutions and modes of behaviour would be shown in a favourable light, functioning efficiently, fairly and for the benefit of all. Social conflict we would expect to be largely ignored or, where presented, shown as occurring and being resolved within the established and legitimate social institutions of liberal, democratic society. Issues of power, inequality, disruptive social conflict and change would be largely ignored. (p.20)

Moreover, one might anticipate that the pedagogy utilised by teachers would stress the didactic transmission of knowledge, individualised task performance and extrinsic rewards, and that teacher-student relationships would be largely autocratic, involve close supervision and emphasise obedience and conformity to teacher-imposed standards and expectations.

However, the form of Anti-Racist Education that I have proposed bears little resemblance to this model of education and would not perform the function outlined here. One of its aims would be to produce students who were able to view their society critically and to challenge established systems and practices if they perceived them to be unjust or unfair. It advocates a curriculum which would encourage students to consider issues of conflict, inequality, social change and alternative forms of social organisation, and a pedagogy based on greater student participation and control and more egalitarian teacher-student relationships. As such it would be a form of education that might ultimately be disruptive rather than supportive of the status quo.

This study tries to assess the extent to which teachers in one school are committed to and can put into practice this form of education. It thus assesses, in a small way, the question of whether education reproduces or challenges the established knowledge and attitudes of a capitalist society.

Previous Research

I now want to briefly review research which has been conducted in the areas discussed above. I will begin with work on within-school processes and equal opportunities, especially that which relates to ethnic minority students, and then look at research on Multicultural and Anti-Racist teaching.

Within-school processes and equal opportunities

An increasing interest in interpretivist approaches and ethnographic research methods has led sociologists to devote considerable attention in recent years to the influence of internal workings of schools on equal opportunities. As I have already explained, it is possible to distinguish three approaches. The first, the phenomenologically orientated Marxism of the 'new' sociology of education, whilst rich in ideas, has unfortunately resulted in comparatively little empirical research of relevance to this issue. Whilst there has been some work on the ways dominant ideology is reflected in school curricula (see for example Apple 1979, Anyon 1978) and on competing influences on the politics of curriculum areas (see for example Lawton 1980, Ball and Lacey 1980, Goodson 1985), it often seems assumed that as school knowledge and conceptions of ability derive from the culture of dominant groups that students from privileged backgrounds stand a higher chance of educational success and therefore a situation of unequal opportunities exists. This may be true, but, as Hammersley and Hargreaves (1983) point out, there has been little empirical work on the mechanics of this situation in the classroom, for example, on the responses from students of different social backgrounds to school knowledge or the ways in which teachers recognise and evaluate 'cultural capital'.

One early piece of work that might be placed within this tradition is Becker's (1952b) description of the notion of the 'ideal' student held by the Chicago teachers he interviewed. This notion was based upon particular cultural assumptions of desirable and acceptable behaviour. In a differentiated and culturally diverse society, Becker explained, students varied widely in their ability to conform to teachers' ideas of the ideal student, and those of 'lower class' origins were least likely to conform.

Teachers tended to favour those students who corresponded most closely to their ideal and thus to discriminate against 'lower class' students.

Another early American piece is Cicourel and Kitsuse's (1963) study of high school counsellors who were responsible for making decisions about the allocation of student to appropriate courses. They argue that, even when students had similar academic records, counsellors were more likely to perceive those from upper and middle class backgrounds as college prospects and place them on higher status courses. Their assessments of students were influenced by a whole range of non-academic, cultural criteria such as appearance, demeanor, manner and parental background.

In Britain an example of this type of work is a study by Keddie (1971) of a secondary school Humanities department. She pointed out that the knowledge which is valued in school tends to be 'expert', abstract knowledge rather than the concrete, everyday knowledge with which the majority of students are familiar. Keddie observed that the teachers' perceptions of the students, based on their ability to handle this 'expert' knowledge and their stream placement (which was strongly related to social class), influenced the sort of knowledge they made available to them. Despite egalitarian intentions the teachers taught different forms of knowledge to different ability groups. Another example is Vulliamy's (1976) study of school music. He pointed out that 'what counts as school music' emphasised abstract, theoretical knowledge and thus favoured more middle class students.

A more recent example is a study of a secondary school English department conducted by St. John-Brooks (1983). She argues that the literary approach to English teaching favoured by the teachers, which emphasised an emotional involvement with great works of literature, was unintentionally elitist, engaging the interest and enthusiasm of many middle class students whilst alienating many of the working class students. The teachers made little effort to bridge the 'cultural gaps' between their conception of English and the everyday world of their working class students, many of whom were thus unable to understand or fully appreciate the texts they were studying.

Research like Keddie's which is concerned partly with the knowledge teachers have of students and how this influences the way they treat them in the classroom is of course related to the second major theoretical approach to within-school processes, the idea of the self-fulfilling prophecy. A lot of research on this idea followed the publication of Rosenthal and Jacobson's

influential 'Pygmalion in the Classroom' in 1968. I have not the space to review this research in detail (see Brophy and Good 1974 and Rogers 1982 for detailed reviews). It has, however, often shown conflicting and inconclusive results. Although Rosenthal and Jacobson showed that the expectations they induced in teachers, by informing them that randomly selected students were likely to 'bloom', did appear in some cases to be fulfilled, other researchers have found it difficult to replicate their findings (see for example Claiborn 1969). A number of studies have attempted to simulate expectancy-type situations in controlled 'laboratory' conditions (for example Rubovits and Maehr 1973). Many of these seem to demonstrate that expectations do affect the way individuals interact with others, but, of course, it may not be possible to generalise from these results to 'real' life situations.

There have been a number of studies of the effect of differentiation and consequent naturally occurring teacher expectations in ordinary classroom situations. Some of these do seem to show that teachers perceptions and expectations can influence the way they interact with students and that this may have consequences for students performance and future educational opportunities. In a study of an all black American elementary school Rist (1970, 1973) described how the kindergarten teacher divided her students on the basis of her early perception of their educability, assigned them to different seat places and distributed her time and attention unequally, creating a caste-like system of stratification which formed the basis of later unequal treatment in the school (see also Gouldner 1978). Nash (1973) also argues that the teachers he observed treated students differently according to how favourably they viewed the student. Sharp and Green (1975), in their study of a 'progressive' primary school, showed how the teachers' typifications of students in their classes developed into a rigid social structure which influenced the opportunities that they made available to different types of students. Brophy and Good (1974), employing a more structured observation system than the other studies quoted here, found that the American elementary school teachers they studied were more likely to interact with and praise those students they regarded as high achievers. Pollard (1984) compared the classrooms of two primary school teachers and concluded that the 'coping strategies' which the teachers and students employed combined together to reinforce differentiation, this process being more extreme in the classroom of the more 'formal' teacher. Overall it seems

that in certain circumstances teachers' differentiation and expectations of students influence the way the latter are treated which, in turn, can influence their performance. Unfortunately it is unclear in precisely which circumstances these processes are likely to occur.

The third theoretical approach to within-school processes which I have identified is the work of Hargreaves (1967), Lacey (1970) and Ball (1981) which links the process of differentiation with the polarisation of student attitudes in secondary schools. Hargreaves and Lacey documented these processes in a secondary modern and a grammar school respectively. Both found that those students who gravitated to the lower streams were disadvantaged because their low status was highlighted, and they were allocated the less experienced teachers who had low expectations of their academic potential. Moreover, the development of anti-school sub-cultures in these classes, as a result of their low status, tended to reduce student motivation and therefore their chances of academic success. Such students were disproportionately working class and, although Hargreaves and Lacey suggest that school processes have an independent effect on outcomes, class disadvantages tended to be confirmed in the schools they studied.

In studying the newly established comprehensive schools Ford (1969) argued that working class students of comparable ability to middle class were more likely to be allocated to low streams. Comprehensive schools, she concluded, often merely reproduced the inequalities of the tripartite system under a single roof. Ball (1981) came to a similar conclusion when he examined the processes of differentiation and polarisation in a case study of a large banded comprehensive school. He found that working class students, even those of comparable ability to middle class, tended to be allocated to the lower bands and that teachers operated with 'band stereotypes' which included lower expectations of the lower bands. This process of selection was reinforced at third year level when students chose their options and were guided onto very different curriculum tracks. Lower band students were frequently barred from high status courses because of their previous curriculum experiences.

Lacey (1970) also described the process of informal differentiation which occurred in first year classes before streaming at Hightown Grammar and argued that a definite social structure emerged which formed the basis of teacher-student and student-student relationships. Ball (1981) studied the

newly established mixed ability classes at Beachside Comprehensive school and concluded that 'the mixed-ability form-group appears to produce a microcosm of the banding system, with the processes of differentiation and polarisation taking place within each form-group' (p.273, his emphasis). He explained that ability differentiation had remained of crucial importance to the teachers and described how they communicated to students their position in the classroom status system by various informal 'cues' and selected groups out for differential treatment, thus 'sponsoring' talented pupils.

It seems from much of this research that internal school structures and practices may make available different opportunities to different groups of students, and thus amplify the effects of the unequal class distribution of material and cultural resources outside the school. Schools and individual classrooms often develop elaborate, hierarchical social structures, in which some students are accorded greater status, prestige and social honour than others. Such social structures frequently mirror those of the wider society. High status students, despite a rhetoric of egalitarianism, often receive superior material and social resources, and are put onto routes which involve the study of high status subjects and curricula (15) which are more likely to lead to favourable occupational and social positions.

Several writers have also described how school processes may encourage gender inequalities (Marland 1983). A number of studies have shown the gender differences that exist in the opportunities to study certain subjects (see for example Benn and Simon 1972, and the HMI survey of secondary education in England - DES 1979a), and how the system of option choice affects girls (Pratt, Bloomfield and Seale 1984). Others have focused on the different expectations teachers have of boys and girls and how these affect relationships in the classroom (Stanworth 1981).

As I noted earlier, there has been increasing concern recently about how in-school processes affect ethnic minority students. What research has been conducted on this issue? Following the claim that Afro/Caribbean students were being wrongly allocated to schools for the 'educationally subnormal' (ESN schools) (Coard 1971) Tomlinson (1979) conducted a study of the allocation of 40 students, 18 of whom were of minority group origin, to such schools in Birmingham. From a phenomenological perspective she examined the social construction of the idea of 'educational sub-normality' and argued that there is no objective basis to this idea, but it represents the outcome of a

political and status contest between competing professional groups - teachers, psychologists, health and social workers. Moreover, the 'dominant cultural beliefs' about the educational characteristics and potential of students are related to the professionals' own position in the social structure. She concludes that these beliefs, which utilise judgements about 'behavioural, family and class characteristics' of students, have 'the effect of "reproducing" some lower class, and black, children in an inferior social and economic position'.

Another study which challenges established conceptions of educational ability and means of assessment of black students is Labov's (1969) work on the language of working class American black students. Labov questions the idea that black students are linguistically deprived. He demonstrated that in an informal environment with a black interviewer black boys, who previously appeared linguistically poor, can display complex language skills, albeit in a 'non-standard' form. Labov's study draws attention to the fact that dominant conceptions of ability are based upon particular cultural definitions.

His work also raises the broad question of the validity of criteria and methods used in the assessment of ethnic minority students. I have not got the space here to review research in this area in detail (see

Taylor 1983). A number of writers have pointed out the whole concept of educational testing may be more culturally familiar, and therefore favourable, to some groups than others (see Oakland and Philips 1973). Taylor (1983) explains that tests may be inadequate measures of educational ability for a number of reasons. They generally assume that the student adequately understands the language of the test and tester, and that the knowledge component of the test is equally available to students of different cultural backgrounds. They often take no account of the influence of the testing situation - the physical and social context in which the test is taken, student perceptions of the tester or the purpose of the test, or the factors influencing student motivation. But Taylor concludes that research conducted so far does not enable us to judge how much or when such factors influence the assessed ability of ethnic minority students.

To return to the question of language. Labov (1969) suggests that teachers negative attitudes to minority languages may lead them to make erroneous assessments of the academic ability of ethnic minority students and thus treat them inappropriately in the classroom. In Britain research on

language issues has largely concentrated on documenting the extent and types of ethnic minority languages (see for example Rosen and Burgess 1980, Sutcliffe 1982), the provision of ESL (see Tomlinson 1983 for a review), and the issues raised by 'creole' usage amongst Afro/Caribbean students. More recently there has been an increase in interest in the issue of mother tongue teaching. Unfortunately, there has been little research which has attempted to document actual practices in schools or indeed to evaluate the effectiveness of any changes which are implemented.

The Afro/Caribbean language issue, with which I am mainly concerned, has been dominated by discussion of the relationship between the use of creole and educational achievement, and the stance which teachers should take towards such language in the classroom. Following the debate regarding the relative merits of different class-based language forms for academic success (Bernstein 1973, Rosen 1972, Keddle 1973) several socio-linguists have focused on the validity of creoles and the extent to which they interfere with student performance in mainstream or 'standard' English. Opinion about this seems to be mixed. Some, for example Wight (1976, see also Wight et al. 1978), argue that most Afro/Caribbean students become fairly easily bi-dialectal and the use of creole does not pose particular problems. Others, for example Trudgill (1975) and Edwards (1979), point out a variety of problems that can emerge as Afro/Caribbean students learn standard English. They suggest that more efforts need to be made in the provision of what Rex (Rex et al. 1983) calls 'second stage English instruction' and teacher in-service training (INSET) so that teachers are able to recognise and deal effectively with these problems. There appears to be no published research on whether L.E.A.s have provided such INSET or, if they have, into its effectiveness in helping teachers to do this. However, there are some accounts written by teachers about how they have confronted this issue (for example Richmond 1979, Twitchin and Demuth 1981).

Trudgill (1975) and Edwards (1979) also identify teacher attitudes to student language as important. They argue that many teachers have negative views of minority student language. This may have important implications for the more general attitudes they have towards these students in the classroom and for their assessment of students' ability. Edwards (1978) presents some evidence to support this view, but her study records the attitudes of student teachers to different speech forms and was conducted in an experimental

environment. Neither author presents much evidence about the attitudes of practising teachers or how these attitudes affect, or are conveyed in, classroom practice.

They, along with others, propose that teacher attitudes and practice should be based on the principles of appreciating student languages and the fostering of bi-dialecticalism (c.f. Bullock Report - DES 1975). However, again there are few accounts of these principles in action (though Stone 1981 provides one limited example) or of their effectiveness, except again from practising teachers like Richmond.

Moving now to the issue of how teacher expectations of ethnic minority students influence their academic performance, there has been some research in America which seems to indicate that some teachers have lower expectations of black students and teach them accordingly (see Rubovits and Maeher 1973, Rist 1970, 1973). In Britain a small amount of research has shed light on teachers perceptions of and attitudes towards ethnic minority students. A postal survey conducted by Brittan (1976) revealed that the teachers sampled tended to have negative and generalised views of students of West Indian origin, as did the headteachers interviewed by Tomlinson (1979). Hammersley (1980), in an ethnographic study of an inner city secondary modern school in the early 1970s, recorded a considerable amount of racism towards ethnic minority students in staffroom talk, but noted that this did not appear to result in racial discrimination in the classroom.

Giles (1977), after researching in a number of primary and secondary schools in London, came to the conclusion that 'there are both subtle and overt forms of discrimination taking place in British schools, resulting from teachers' attitudes and behaviour...towards West Indian students' (p.75). But while he did describe some of the difficulties faced by and confusions amongst teachers in multi-ethnic schools he failed to provide much evidence to substantiate his claims. Green (1983) in a study of 70 middle and junior school teachers found that the negative attitudes of a number of the teachers to their students' ethnicity, combined with their preference for particular teaching styles, influenced interaction patterns in the multi-ethnic classroom. The result being that students of West Indian origin tended to be treated less positively by the ethnically 'highly intolerant' teachers.

In an ethnographic study of a secondary school Driver (1979) noted the confusion and uncertainty, deriving from a lack of cultural awareness, which

characterised teachers' relationships with 'West Indian' students, and which threatened their confident management of classroom situations. The result was that teachers were more likely to misjudge West Indian boys especially, and to allocate them disproportionately to the school's middle stream class. These students became progressively more alienated from school (because of external factors also) and when it came to public examinations did much worse than their white peers. A more recent study by Carrington and Wood (1983) of a northern comprehensive school suggested that some of the teachers held negative views of the academic and behavioural potential of West Indian students and were prepared to accept lower standards of academic work and behaviour from them than they were from white students. West Indian students were perceived more favourably in areas of practical work such as Art or Drama and in sport. Indeed the use of sport as a means of motivating alienated students (who were often black) and syphoning off their disruptive potential served to further channel many black students in this direction. Yates (1984) noted that several teachers in the 'remedial' department of the comprehensive school that he studied had ethnocentric and negative views of Asian students. Moreover, he argues that the school's inflexible curriculum, which valued certain activities, such as improvised drama, and certain qualities, such as uninhibited self-expression, inadvertently discriminated against Asian students. Because Asian students found such activities culturally strange they were often made to feel alien and inferior in the school.

In the London comprehensive school that he studied Troyna (1978) noted that the lower streams contained a disproportionate number of West Indian students. These students tended to pick their friends from the same level of the streaming system and develop, in contrast to their black peers in higher streams, a strong sub-culture which emphasised black identity, 'an embryo of a culture which is oppositional to the mainstream'. The school's streaming system therefore encouraged 'polarisation', in the sense used by Lacey (1970), on racial lines. More recently, Wright (1986) conducted ethnographic case studies of two Midlands comprehensive schools. She found that relationships between white staff and Afro/Caribbean students were particularly fraught. Some staff in both schools regarded Afro/Caribbean students negatively and many of these students believed that they were treated badly by the teachers and by the school system. As a result they became alienated and difficult,

further contributing to their teachers' negative views. Moreover, when Wright examined the processes used to allocate students to sets and bands she found that Afro/Caribbean students, of comparative ability to white and Asian students, were more likely to be allocated to lower groups. Wright concluded that the 'antagonistic' relationship which developed between white teachers and Afro/Caribbean students, 'influenced the teachers' judgements of pupils' ability and that some Afro/Caribbean pupils may have been placed in inappropriate ability groups and examination sets, thus restricting their opportunities.' Teachers, as Driver (1979) noted, seemed to confound 'ability' and 'behaviour' in the case of Afro/Caribbean students and were thus more likely to mis-allocate them (16). This also appears to have been the case in a study by Middleton (1983) (quoted in Tomlinson 1986) where black boys despite often having the ability to enter the 'A' band, were allocated to the 'B' band, thus being deprived of the opportunity to sit O levels. Tomlinson (1986) suggests that in her study of curriculum option choice in 18 multi-ethnic schools similar processes were at work. She concludes that, even though teachers may not intend to discriminate the 'normal school procedures' may disadvantage Afro/Caribbean students by guiding them away from high status, credentialing curriculum routes.

Research evidence then, though rather patchy and small scale, does seem to indicate that some teachers hold negative and ethnocentric views of Afro/Caribbean children in particular and that these views can influence expectations and behaviour towards them in the school and the classroom. Moreover, it may be that the processes of differentiation which operate in schools, whilst not designed to disadvantage on racial or ethnic lines, in fact often do. These studies seem to suggest that in some schools practices exist which prevent Afro/Caribbean students especially from enjoying equality of opportunity.

However, because the representativeness of such studies is impossible to establish it is very difficult to estimate the extent of this problem. Sociology being a critical discipline of course tends to focus more on the 'bad' rather than the 'good', and to report contradictions between professed ideals and reality rather than harmony. All we can say is that such processes can and do occur. In considering the implementation of the principles of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education which I outlined above the question must be - to what extent have L.E.A. and school policies changed the sort of

discriminatory school practices I have described or prevented them from occurring in the first place? There have been no studies to date which have addressed this question.

We must also consider briefly the situation of ethnic minority teachers. There is a little research evidence on the numbers, careers and experiences of ethnic minority teachers in British schools, and even less on the effectiveness of 'equal opportunities policies' at L.E.A. or school level in increasing their representation and standing and reducing the incidence of discrimination. A recent C.R.E. survey (Ranger 1988) of eight LEAs revealed that the proportion of ethnic minority teachers was low compared with the proportion of ethnic minority people in the population as a whole, and that they were more likely than their white counterparts to be on the lower salary scales. Further, the number of minority teachers in training is also disproportionately low. The study found that ethnic minority teachers on average had to make twice as many applications for jobs as white teachers, and that white teachers were significantly more likely to be encouraged by their headteacher to apply for jobs in the school in which they were teaching. 75% of the 431 ethnic minority teachers surveyed also believed that their career prospects had been adversely affected by racial discrimination.

There have been a number of complaints of discrimination from ethnic minority teachers (see for example Lister 1980) and the Swann Report (Committee of Inquiry 1985) concluded that it was likely that there was some discrimination against ethnic minority teachers, but unfortunately they found 'evidence of actual discrimination...hard to come by'. Gibbes (1980) in a study of 27 Afro/Caribbean teachers for the Caribbean Teachers Association claimed that they felt they had more difficulty in obtaining teaching jobs and appropriate promotion, but it is difficult to know from the study whether they actually faced discrimination. Thus although some evidence points to inequality of opportunity for ethnic minority teachers it is impossible to say conclusively that this is the case.

The employment of ethnic minority teachers is central to much prescriptive writing in the area of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education (see for example Committee of Inquiry 1985). The argument is, of course, that such teachers should enjoy equal opportunities of right, but also that their presence in schools will be of positive benefit to minority students, because they can act as role models and be more able to understand and

appreciate their backgrounds, and to white students as they will be able to experience minority group members in professional positions of authority. However, there have been no studies of L.E.A. or school efforts to appoint more ethnic minority teachers or of the effectiveness of such schemes.

Multicultural and Anti-Racist curriculum and teaching

I now want to turn to studies which have examined the influence of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education on the school curriculum and pedagogy. This area is rich in prescriptive advice for curriculum planners and teachers, but extremely weak in description and evaluation. Numerous books and pamphlets from academics, teachers and organisations present a rationale for Multicultural and, to a lesser extent, Anti-Racist Education (see for example CRE 1978, Lynch 1981, Craft and Bardell 1984, Nixon 1985) and various handbooks and resource lists have been produced for teachers (see for example Hicks 1981b, One World Trust 1980, Fisher and Hicks 1985).

A number of teachers have attempted to describe their efforts to implement Multicultural and Anti-Racist ideals. A recent example is a collection of articles by teachers compiled by Martin Straker-Welds (1984) which attempts to document 'good' practice in Inner London Schools. In the section on secondary education, curriculum content and approaches are described by teachers from a number of different subject areas in different schools. There are a number of other examples (McNeal and Rogers 1971, Searle 1972, 1979, Jeffcoate 1979, ALTARF 1979, Twitchen and Demuth 1981, Brett in Jeffcoate 1982, see also the journal *Multicultural Teaching*).

Interesting though such work is, it usually consists of teachers describing retrospectively aspects of their practice which they consider particularly good. Whilst not doubting the sincerity of such teachers, what they describe may be very different from what actually happens in the day-to-day routine of their classrooms. Moreover, these particular teachers are likely to be rather unusual. Few teachers are actually motivated to write articles about their teaching. Those that do are likely therefore to be unrepresentative of teachers as a whole, even of those who are attempting to innovate along these lines.

Again, unfortunately, there have been very few attempts to document or evaluate Multicultural and Anti-Racist curriculum development and teaching more objectively. This is surprising given the amount of prescriptive writing in the area and the development since the late 1970s of L.E.A. and school policy statements. This has meant that the often bitter and acrimonious debate about such issues has lacked much empirical substance about what teachers in schools

are actually doing or indeed about the effectiveness of what they are advised to do. This weakness is by no means confined to the area of Multicultural and Anti-Racist education. Hammersley and Hargreaves (1983) note that sociologists of education in general have tended, in their rush to describe the 'hidden curriculum' of schools, to neglect the 'official curriculum', thus leaving curriculum debates in this more general field open to unsubstantiated assertion.

Tomlinson (1983) accounts for this lack of empirical work in Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education by the fact that teachers have been reluctant to change their practices in this direction. (She also notes that the publication of various Schools Council studies have been vetoed). There is clearly a considerable amount of evidence to support her view. The work of the research team at CRER reviewed above shows a good deal of ambivalence and in some cases hostility from many teachers towards these ideas. Brittan's national survey of headteachers and heads of department in 1976 showed that many were opposed to the introduction of Multicultural initiatives into the curriculum. Little and Willey's work (1981) revealed a similar pattern especially amongst teachers in schools with few ethnic minority students. Widlake and Bloom (1979) also found a considerable amount of apathy amongst teachers to new Multicultural curriculum materials they were piloting. Cashmore and Bagley (1984) reported that many independent school headteachers were hostile to change along Multicultural and Anti-Racist lines. There have, however, been no studies to date which have concentrated on teacher attitudes in one school.

But there clearly has been some development of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education, as the large number of accounts from teachers show. Tomlinson's implication that there has not been the change to evaluate is clearly too harsh. Alternative, and I feel more plausible, explanations are that academics have felt more inclined to devote their energies to speculative theoretical debate rather than detailed empirical study, that there has never been a tradition in education to base practice on systematic evaluation, both of which are symptomatic of the gap which exists between academics and teachers (see Foster and Troyna 1988), and that, quite simply, funds have not been made available for this sort of work.

So what educational research has there been into the development of Multicultural and Anti-Racist curriculum and teaching? The report of the Schools Council project 'Education for a Multicultural Society', which ran from 1973 to 1976 and was intended to provide examples of innovation and 'good'

practice to serve as guidelines for other teachers, has only been published in limited form (Schools Council 1981). Indeed, it is disappointing that so few publications have stemmed from this project.

Jeffcoate (1981b) presents one case study from the project, the perspectives of two groups of students in a middle school on their class project on India. He concludes that the inclusion of Indian history in the school curriculum 'enhanced the cultural knowledge and pride' of the Sikh boys he interviewed, but 'alienated' and 'nourished the prejudices' of the white girls. This he feels supported the overall conclusion of the project that the strategy of teaching about countries of origin in schools where race relations were poor and the principles of multiculturalism undeveloped might in fact be counter productive, merely serving to antagonise white children and embarrass minority children.

In an earlier publication Jeffcoate (1979) gives an interesting account of one teacher's attempt to develop a Multicultural Humanities curriculum in an inner city, multi-ethnic secondary school. He describes a series of lessons which focused on the topic of 'slavery'. He argues that the teacher's pedagogy, which was based around relatively free class discussions in which students were encouraged to raise issues that concerned them, was particularly effective in generating inter-racial understanding and allowing students to explore their own ideas and reflect on their own experiences. He does, however, point to a number of what he regarded as content omissions from the unit which he felt limited students' understanding of racism. Most of the class, he maintained, continued to hold the superficial view that 'racial prejudice is some kind of mental aberration - the monopoly of the jealous, the daft and the mad'.

A more critical description of the practice of Multicultural Education is provided by Stone (1981). Her general argument is that in their efforts to compensate for what they erroneously perceive as the low self-esteem of Afro/Caribbean students white teachers have substituted an undemanding, non-academic, pseudo progressive 'Multiracial Education' which is unsuited to the majority of Afro/Caribbean students. This concentration on the goal of social adjustment rather than academic attainment, and the strategy of therapy rather than teaching, has contributed to the underachievement of many Afro/Caribbean students. It has resulted in "watering down" the curriculum and "cooling out" black city children while at the same time creating for teachers, both radical and liberal, the illusion that they are doing something special for a

particularly disadvantaged group' (p.100). This is an attractive argument and there may be some substance to it, but unfortunately Stone's criticisms of Multicultural Education rest on rather thin evidence. Her conclusion that teachers in the name of Multicultural Education have forsaken academic goals and replaced them with mental health goals rests on an unstated number of interviews and discussions with only four teachers and she presents no evidence from the teachers to support this view. Further, her conclusions about the practice of Multicultural Education rest on the observation of only eight lessons in three schools (in one of her case study schools she did not observe any lessons). Her conclusions therefore must be treated as largely speculative.

The only study which has attempted to describe and evaluate specific teaching about race relations is the research directed by Lawrence Stenhouse between 1972 and 1975 (Stenhouse et al. 1982). Following a small project by Miller (1969) which showed that teaching about race relations could actually increase racial prejudice, this research attempted to evaluate the effectiveness of three different teaching strategies - teaching about race relations through the Humanities Curriculum Project 'neutral chairman' approach, through drama, and through a 'committed teacher' approach. The study's main aim was to develop, in collaboration with teachers, a knowledge of the pedagogic possibilities and problems and the effects of these three methods of teaching about race, whilst at the same time providing the teachers involved with a chance to research and reflect on their own teaching (Stenhouse 1975). Considerable detailed case study material on the experiences of the different teachers and the reactions of their students were produced which illustrated the complexity of teaching about such an issue. The researchers also measured student racial attitudes before and after the teaching programmes and concluded that on the whole there was a slight but noticeable overall improvement in student racial attitudes in the 'neutral chairman' and the 'committed teacher' approaches, but little change following teaching through drama. However, for a minority of students the reverse occurred.

There have been even fewer attempts to describe or evaluate the Anti-Racist Education of the more 'political' variety outlined above. Anti-Racists have been more inclined to provide virulent critiques of Multicultural Education and general school practices than concrete proposals or examples of their philosophy in practice. Only Searle (1979) describes such an approach in his own teaching, but he in fact gives little information on the pedagogy he

employed, restricting himself to outlining his ideology of schooling, the curriculum content he used and giving examples of student writing. His approach and some of the curriculum materials which have been designed in this area (see for example Institute of Race Relations 1982a and b) have been criticised by Jeffcoate (1984a and b) as 'illiberal' and evoking 'the spectres of indoctrination'. I have sympathy with some of Jeffcoate's comments. As I have explained, I do not think that teachers should present to their students a dogmatic, unidimensional view of the world. They should encourage debate, discussion and the consideration of a variety of perspectives on a particular issue. However, it may be reasonable for teachers to introduce into classroom debate neglected, critical perspectives, which on the surface may appear 'biased', as long as they do so within an environment which encourages critical debate and discussion. Unfortunately, it is difficult to make any judgements on the basis of Jeffcoate's criticisms without some description of Anti-Racism in practice in the classroom.

The one published description of Anti-Racist practice is in Godfrey Brandt's (1986) work. After an elaborate and sometimes confusing rationalisation of the aims of Anti-Racist Education which often seems to me to rest on rather dubious theoretical and empirical assertions about the nature and role of current educational provision, he provides a small number of examples of what he considers to be Anti-Racist Education in practice. He describes in detail the curriculum content and pedagogy employed. However, although Brandt tries to put them into the context of the school and school policy, they are isolated lessons and we do not know how representative they are of the particular teachers or of wider school practice. Brandt's observation of classroom interaction is also rather superficial, resting largely on common sense value judgements rather than systematic analysis. Moreover, few of the lessons appear to differ radically from the Multicultural approach described by Jeffcoate or the Anti-Racist teaching documented by Stenhouse et al. (1982).

There have, then, been few systematic attempts to describe the application of Multicultural and Anti-Racist principles to curriculum and pedagogy in schools, and fewer still to evaluate their effectiveness. The work of Jeffcoate and Stenhouse and his colleagues represent the only substantial moves in this direction.

Research Methods

I began this research with a commitment to develop a greater degree of collaboration with teachers than has traditionally been the case in school-based research. My aim was to conduct a piece of 'action research' along the lines proposed by Stenhouse (1975) and developed by Day (1981) and Adelman (1983) in which the researcher acts as a 'consultant' to the school, making him/herself available to assist teachers in a process of reflecting on and improving their classroom practice. In this type of work the process of research begins more centrally with teachers' concerns and aspirations, in this case the attempt to implement Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education, and tries to aid teachers in realising these goals. During that process teacher and researcher share a more egalitarian professional relationship than in the traditional researcher/subject model. The teacher shares in establishing research goals and questions, analysing data, and developing new teaching strategies which are monitored as part of the research process. The object of the research becomes more the learning process in both teacher and researcher and the improvement of practice, than the development of sociological theory and publication of a completed monograph.

I still retain considerable enthusiasm for this type of work, but it became apparent soon after beginning my field work at Milltown High that this model was inappropriate in this particular school at this particular time, despite the fact that the access to the school had been negotiated partly on this basis. There were several reasons. First, the teachers, along with others in the profession, were in the middle of a prolonged campaign of industrial action in pursuit of their pay claim and had banned any curriculum development work or work out of school hours. It simply was not possible to collaborate with teachers in the way I had planned, in these circumstances. Secondly, I became increasingly sceptical of the practicality of working with teachers like this unless a great deal of INSET time was made available. Teaching in most secondary schools is a particularly demanding and time consuming job at the best of times, and the situation at Milltown High was especially difficult as I shall explain later. A long period of negotiation is required in this type of work in order to clearly establish research goals and questions and the respective roles of teacher and researcher. Moreover, it must not be assumed

that teacher and researcher share, or can come to share, the same conception of 'good' practice, a situation which is essential if this type of work is to proceed (see Foster and Troyna 1988). Finally, during the early stages of my research I was relatively uncertain about the implications of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education for school practice. This meant that I found it difficult to adopt the sort of 'advisory' role that some of the teachers seemed to expect.

Thus my research became a far more 'traditional' piece of work than had been originally anticipated. I addressed the questions outlined above by adopting what have been termed 'ethnographic methods' (see McCall and Simmons 1969, Hammersley and Atkinson 1983, Burgess 1984, Woods 1986). Such an approach has wide roots, but can ultimately be traced back to the work of the early anthropologists (see Burgess 1984 for a history). In recent years this approach has been used to study institutions, communities and sub-cultures in industrial societies, as exemplified by the Chicago school of sociologists. In the sociology of education in Britain ethnography was first used by researchers such as Hargreaves (1967), Lacey (1970) and Lambart (1970, 1976) to study the internal workings of secondary schools. Their pioneering work has been followed up by others like Ball (1981) who examined similar questions in new contexts and those exploring the application of phenomenological and symbolic interactionist theory to school life (for example Edwards and Furlong 1978, Woods 1979, Hammersley 1980, Burgess 1983, Pollard 1984).

The essence of the ethnographic method is that the researcher spends a great deal of time living amongst or working with the people he/she is trying to study and at the same time observing their social behaviour. He/she is able to experience their world and examine the social processes that occur within it from, as near as is possible, an insider's viewpoint. The method is sometimes called 'participant observation' though, as will be clear from this case study, this does not necessarily mean that the researcher participates in an established role in the setting under study. What it does mean is that the researcher, whilst preserving an element of detachment, attempts to see and document the social world under study from the perspectives of participants.

The great strength of this method is what has been called 'naturalism' (see Hammersley and Atkinson 1983). The researcher studies what people say and do in the natural settings where they live, rather than what they do in an artificial setting such as a laboratory or say they do in response to interview or survey questions. He/she examines the complexity of social interaction and

social processes as they occur and learns the meanings and interpretations which actors give to the actions of others. As Hammersley and Atkinson note the essential theoretical basis of this approach is 'interpretivism' - that social actors respond to situations according to how they perceive and interpret those situations, and that such interpretations are open to continual review and adjustment. The ethnographer tries to understand such processes of meaning-making from an insider's point of view.

In my research I was trying to find out how the teachers in one school perceived, interpreted and responded to calls that they adopt a multifarious reform called Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education. I wanted to examine how they married their response to this innovation with all the other pressures and constraints that impinged upon them from outside and inside the classroom. In other words I was interested in what meanings they attached to these ideas and how they related to other aspects of their social world. Moreover, I did not want to find out only what they said they were doing, but what they actually were doing in their day-to-day practices, and the extent to which these corresponded to the basic principles they were espousing.

One of the difficulties, however, of the ethnographic method is that it is extremely time-consuming since it necessitates not only learning a sometimes complex culture or set of institutional norms, but also spending time in getting to know and becoming accepted by the members of the institution. This is essential for two reasons. First, in order to gain the confidence of members, to convince them of one's good intentions and that their interests will not be adversely affected by the research, and to develop key informants who are willing to assist in building an accurate picture of the social processes under consideration. Second, in order to decrease the possibilities of reactivity i.e. that subjects will behave differently because they are being studied. These issues were extremely important in my work as I was researching what to many is the particularly sensitive area of 'race'.

I was aided in two respects with these problems. First, I had recently been a teacher (and, I must admit, look and dress like one) and had taught in a very similar school to Milltown High. Indeed I had actually taught in a school in Milltown so I was fairly familiar with the local scene and the concerns of local teachers, subjects I could frequently capitalise on in conversation. I was therefore very much culturally a 'member' rather than a 'stranger' (Schutz 1964). Second, some of the school staff had taken part in the initial selection process

for my appointment to the research team at CRER. They had chosen, so I was told, someone whom they 'felt they could work with', in other words someone who appeared to be culturally in tune with them. Though, as Delamont (1981) notes, this may not always be an advantage.

A method used by ethnographers to aid them in the process of getting to know the setting and its members is to take on an established role in the group under study. In some cases ethnographers have adopted the strategy of covert observation. This clearly was not possible in my case, although at times it could be argued that I was researching covertly since people clearly did not know I was present or had 'forgotten' who I was. One possibility was for me to teach part time in the school. This method was adopted by Hargreaves (1967), Lacey (1970) and Burgess (1983). This appears to have helped them establish a research bargain with the school where implicitly time and information were swapped for assistance with the teaching load. This helped them to establish themselves and gain acceptance. However, I decided not to adopt this approach at least until later in the field work. (I did towards the end of the work teach a few lessons and did help out in some ways by taking a register occasionally or accompanying students on trips, and taking them out of lessons for interviews) I felt that my own teaching background equipped me reasonably well to understand the sorts of experiences I observed and was told about, and I did not want to be restricted in my activities by a fixed timetable or a regular commitment. Moreover, a school contains a number of diverse groups with differing perspectives, the most basic division being between the teachers and the students. I did not want to jeopardise my relationship with the students, whom I wished to talk to and if possible use as informants, by becoming too strongly associated with the teachers. I wanted to avoid having to establish a 'reputation' amongst the students, which at Milltown High was particularly difficult, as I shall explain later.

Accordingly I developed a role similar to that adopted by Woods (1979, 1986) which he describes as the 'involved observer'. I 'hung about' around the school, observed lessons where teachers were willing to have me, occasionally helping out, but more often watching and noting down the things I saw, sometimes using a small portable tape-recorder; I participated in staffroom life often spending breaks and lunchtimes chatting and listening, and attended most staff meetings and INSET sessions. I explained to the staff as a whole at the beginning of and during the field work that the purposes of my research were to

describe the practices and procedures in operation in a multi-ethnic school especially those which pertained to policies on Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education, and that hopefully I would be able to help in the realisation of such policies. As I explained above it was not possible to do this in the way I had originally planned, but I did advise on an informal level and, towards the end of the research, ran an INSET session on this topic which most of the staff I talked to thought was useful (although of course these responses may have been politeness). This did, however, make my 'political' position clear to some staff which may have affected their attitude towards me, the things they said to me and what they did in front of me.

Although a minority of staff remained aloof and were unwilling to talk to me, so far as I could tell this was mainly a matter of attitudes to social research in general or personality rather than the specific topic of this research. Whilst at the beginning of the research I attempted to avoid becoming associated with any one group of teachers and sought a general view of the institution by sampling times, places, people and events, as the research began to focus I developed very close relationships with some staff. A number became key informants providing me with detailed information about past and present events in the school. To some I became something of a counsellor to whom they could talk about their problems and quiz me for possible solutions, and I was able to talk about my own limited but similar experiences and the solutions I had tried. To others I was a sounding board for new ideas, and in articulating their views some staff told me that they were able to come to firmer conceptions of their own beliefs, an interesting example of reactivity.

I also mixed informally when I could with students, especially the older ones, though this was difficult to do regularly because of the industrial action and the obvious role and age difference. With them I cultivated the role of 'interested adult', the 'man who was writing a book about the school' (most of the students seemed to think it would be something like 'Grange Hill' and perhaps this is not far from the truth!) who was willing to listen to their perspectives on school, take an interest in what they had to say on their terms (or more or less their terms), and include what they had to say 'in my book' (though I carefully avoided promising a share in the royalties as some requested!).

In cultivating these roles I relied considerably on 'impression management' (Goffman 1971) to present an image which was unthreatening, understanding,

sympathetic, in some cases culturally mature and in others culturally naive. This is not to say, of course, that I was consciously manipulative, as with most role performance much of this activity was unconscious, but I adopted strategies which would maximise the amount of valid data I obtained and minimise reactivity.

I also assured all the members of the school, both before and during the field work, that I would use pseudonyms to refer to the L.E.A., school, and individual teachers and students when my report was written and that this element of confidentiality would serve to protect their interests. Most were reassured by this, but of course it does not guarantee confidentiality absolutely, especially within the institution, as became clear when the members of the Humanities department objected to my giving a copy of the chapter on their department to the headteacher. In as many respects as possible I maintained a commitment to confidentiality and protecting the interests of my subjects during the course of the research.

Thus I developed the type of 'field role' and 'relationships' which enabled me to gain the confidence of staff and students at Milltown High and which facilitated the process of data collection. They also hopefully minimised reactivity and thus probably increased the validity of the data. Of course the use of the methods described above did not ensure that reactivity was eliminated completely. In any research situation, even with covert research, there will be an element of reactivity. For example, my presence in classrooms undoubtedly influenced the way teachers acted, as did my presence in the staffroom, but by lengthy periods of observation my presence did become relatively unobtrusive.

Moreover, I attempted to employ, whenever possible, various forms of 'triangulation' i.e. the cross-referencing and cross-checking of data, in order to increase validity. I compared data from different informants. In chapter 9, for example, it was particularly important to compare the accounts of different teachers in order to check the extent of patterns which emerged as significant. I also compared data from different sources. Again in chapter 9, for example, I observed the early experiences of new teachers in the school to see to what extent they resembled the accounts that established teachers had given me. I also attempted to develop the technique which Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) call 'reflexivity' i.e. the constant monitoring of methods and the contexts in which data was produced and the effect of my presence on events. At various

stages in the text I explain the data collection techniques and the nature of my role in the production of that data.

In all, my field work lasted four school terms (although the bulk of one of these was spent outside the school working on some of the data I had collected and reading) from September 1985 to December 1986 during which time I was in the school for approximately three days each week. I therefore followed the school through a natural cycle - one academic year; though unfortunately it was rather an unusual year given the teachers' industrial action.

As with most ethnographies I used a variety of data collection techniques. I collected a large number of documents both historical and contemporary, although the school was not a particularly rich source of such evidence - a significant indicator in itself of the way it was managed. These ranged from staff circulars and memos to student exercise books and essays. I also made considerable use of interviews. These were sometimes relatively structured, for example the interviews I conducted on teachers' responses to policy, but often they were more loosely structured, for example in the interviews I conducted with the English and Humanities teachers to ascertain their perspectives. With students I used both individual and group interviews, the latter more often taking the form of group discussions with the students having considerable say over the issues raised. As I have already mentioned, a small number of staff, most notably certain members of the English department did become key informants, and they gave me valuable information, sometimes on routine matters which I had missed, but also on events that took place in areas that were closed to me, such as school decision making. A small group of 4th/5th year students also came to act as informants and provided me with their perspectives on events within the school.

Observation was the other main technique I used. I watched and listened in meetings, in assemblies, on corridors and in classrooms, recording my observations either at the time or later in the form of field notes. In classrooms I often used a small, unobtrusive audio-tape recorder from which I was able to reproduce fairly accurate transcripts of verbal interaction between teachers and students in the classroom (though this was not always possible). I have tried to indicate in the text whether the data I present is from field notes or transcripts. At one stage of the research I did adopt a more structured form of classroom observation, an adaptation of the Brophy and Good Dyadic

Interaction system (Brophy and Good 1970, 1974, 1984). I will discuss this method in chapter 8. Initially in my observations I attempted to obtain an overview of the school and so I sampled times, places, people and events when observing. However, as my research questions began to be clarified I started to focus more closely on certain areas of the school - mainly the English and Humanities departments, and on certain issues - the influence of race and ethnicity on interaction, and the implementation of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education policy.

Looking back over this brief account everything appears neat and well planned. This derives perhaps from the process of writing after the research has been completed. However, although the research did follow the sort of path I have indicated, it often did not seem or feel neat and well planned at the time. The path was, at times, extremely bumpy and on occasions threatened to disappear altogether. Ethnographic research, I now know from experience, can be extremely difficult, confusing and at times very stressful. Major decisions have to be taken about which research problems and questions to pursue and how to pursue them. Every day the researcher is faced with a multitude of practical decisions - who or what to observe, who to interview, what to record, how and when to record it, what to say to whom and when. The list is endless. And of course all the time compromises and trade-offs have to be made, as a decision to do one thing may cut off the possibility of doing others. Moreover, the researcher often has no established role in the setting to fulfil. He/she must make the role. There are no immediate colleagues to turn to for support or to provide role models. (You are on your own) He/she must also tread a precarious tight rope between over-rapport and 'going native' on the one hand, and becoming too detached on the other. Managing this marginality can sometimes cause great anxiety. All in all it is an extremely difficult and hazardous enterprise, not to be embarked upon by the faint hearted.

The Organisation of the Thesis

The rest of this thesis is divided into nine chapters. In Chapter 2 I describe the local area in which Milltown High School is situated and some of the school's basic organisational features. Chapter 3 attempts to trace the history of the school's engagement with the whole issue of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education and the way in which policy making in this area has been

approached at school level. This will be related to policy developments in Milltown L.E.A.. In chapter 4 I introduce the headteacher of Milltown High more fully. As I have explained, he was appointed partly on the basis of his commitment to L.E.A. policies on Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education, and so I examine how he interpreted these policies and how they related to his conception of the way he wanted the school to develop. I also describe how he incorporated Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism into his own practice. In chapter 5 I report on a series of interviews I conducted with the majority of staff at Milltown High school to ascertain their perceptions and interpretations of L.E.A. and school policy and how they affected their practice. Chapters 6 and 7 take this theme further. They consist of detailed case studies of two departments, or subject sub-cultures, within the school. I attempted here to study the 'subject paradigm' and 'subject pedagogy' (Ball and Lacey 1980) espoused by the teachers in the English and Humanities departments, the way Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism was incorporated into them, and how they related to practice in the classroom. I selected these two departments on the basis that these were the curriculum areas in which a Multicultural or Anti-Racist approach was most applicable. In chapter 8 I examine the whole issue of racism, in-school processes and equal opportunities in the school. By examining a range of data, from observations, interviews and a detailed look at the processes of differentiation, I attempt to answer the question of whether the teachers at Milltown High had succeeded in creating a non-racist environment in the school. In the penultimate chapter I have tried to broaden out the issue of equal opportunities by looking at the ways in which teachers have to adapt to the inner city school and the implications this has for the educational opportunities of all students at Milltown High. Finally, in my last chapter I summarise the main findings of my research and draw out some of the policy implications for schools and L.E.A.s. I also suggest some possible avenues for future research.

Footnotes

- 1) The term 'race', of course, generally refers to a group of people who have the same or similar physical characteristics, whereas 'ethnic group' refers to those sharing a similar culture and cultural identity. In Britain the main (but of course not all) ethnic minority groups, who are migrants from what is often termed the 'New Commonwealth' and their descendants, are frequently distinguished by their racial characteristics and thus the terms race and ethnicity are often used interchangeably.
- 2) This dilemma parallels that which emerged during the EPA programme (Halsey 1972) over the idea of community education. On the one hand some advocated a form of education in which the curriculum and values of the school reflected the life and world of the local community. Others argued this was merely a form of 'ghetto' education which further deprived the working class child of the opportunity of social mobility.
- 3) The concept of stereotyping has often been used to describe such perceptions. As Milner (1983) points out this concept is often used differently. Sometimes it refers to any generalisation about a social group, in which case it may be an accurate description of the group. More often, however, it is used to refer to incorrect and exaggerated generalisations (in the latter instances, perhaps having some basis in fact). It is, of course, very difficult to determine the extent to which a generalisation is exaggerated, but what we can say is that the universal application of such generalisations to members of a particular racial or ethnic group is invalid. And clearly negative differential treatment based on such generalisation would be racist and therefore unjust.
- 4) As Hammersley (1980) found in the school staffroom he studied.
- 5) Clearly as students are also in the position to make decisions about their actions vis-a-vis other students and teachers then they too could be racist. For example, if other students are ignored, abused or harassed because they are members of a particular racial or ethnic group which is thought to be inferior.

6) Examples from the area of employment are the practices of some companies in recruiting from the relations of current, predominantly white employees or from schools in designated, usually white areas (see Lee and Wrench 1983). In the area of housing, an example is the lengthy residence requirement for council housing (Rex and Moore 1967) and more currently the use of the notion of 'respectability', indicated by conventional family patterns and practices, which is sometimes used to allocate council housing (Henderson and Karn 1987).

7) Inaccurate assessment and evaluation could, of course, disadvantage any student. It seems more likely, however, given the greater cultural gap that often exists between ethnic minority students and their teachers, that misjudgements are more likely with these students.

8) Racial inequality in education has increasingly been explained by reference to the concept of 'institutionalised racism' (see for example - Institute of Race Relations 1980, Mullan 1984, Sanders 1982, Shallice 1984, Brandt 1986). However, as several authors have pointed out (Williams 1985, Troyna and Williams 1986, Rex 1986a) this concept is rather ambiguous and, even more than the concept of racism itself, has had a number of different meanings. Troyna and Williams (1986) explain that it was originally used by American radicals Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton in 1967 to draw attention to the perpetuation of racial inequalities through a complex web of 'interconnecting relationships of several institutional areas'. They argue that the concept has become oversimplified and its use frequently confuses the mechanisms by which racial inequality is reproduced. It fails to distinguish between those practices which are clearly racist in intent and effect, those which are not intentionally racist but which serve to produce racial inequality, and those aspects of inequality which derive from the class situation of ethnic minority groups.

9) This is not, of course, to imply that ethnic minority languages are linguistically inferior.

10) Such ideas might also be introduced in the primary school.

- 11) As schools are in the business of education then the attitudinal development of their students must be of central concern.
- 12) This concern led to the establishment of a Committee of Inquiry in 1979.
- 13) Sociologists adopting a functionalist perspective (for example Durkheim 1961) also see socialisation as one of the main functions of schools, but they tend to view the process more benignly as the transmission of common norms and values and the consequent maintenance of a social system based on value consensus.
- 14) Although such a deterministic view has been challenged. More recent Marxist approaches suggest that the process of social reproduction is less neat. The education system, and other parts of the institutional superstructure of capitalist society, is seen as a relatively autonomous 'site of struggle' with the potential for the production of forms of consciousness which could challenge capitalism.
- 15) I am using 'high status' here in the same way as Ball (1981) to indicate those subjects that have the highest 'exchange value as passports into further and higher education or high status positions in the occupational market' i.e. O levels in the traditionally orientated academic subjects.
- 16) It is worth noting that Wright does not appear to have examined whether similar processes occurred with white students. As Hargreaves (1967) and Lacey (1970) noted it is sometimes the case that 'able' white students are allocated to low stream groups because they are seen as behavioural problems. This seems to happen for several reasons. One is that because of the importance of exam success (to students and teachers) teachers may be less willing to risk the disruption of an exam group by a potentially 'disruptive' student. Another is that behaviour is often used as an indicator of 'motivation' which is clearly an important factor in achievement.

Chapter Two

The Social Context and Social Structure of Milltown High School.

The Local Area

Milltown is a local authority at the centre of a large industrial conurbation in the north of England. Once a prosperous manufacturing centre, the city now suffers from many familiar economic and social problems of Britain's industrial heartland - a declining industrial base, high unemployment, poor housing and falling population. The local authority is Labour controlled and its policies of relative high spending, in order to protect local jobs and services, and commitment to 'equal opportunities' programmes have resulted in conflict with Conservative controlled central government.

Milltown High School is a small neighbourhood comprehensive school serving two main areas of Milltown which I will call Chesham and Richmond Hill. Although its catchment area did include another city ward just to the south, Stephenson Park, in practice few students living in this area attended the school. The local area was perhaps typical of many inner city areas. The population was declining because of a falling birthrate, migration out of the area, continued redevelopment and a local council policy of moving families out of some of the deck-access and multi-storey housing. A large amount of this housing had been taken up by students from the local university and polytechnic which contributed to the transient nature of the population. According to the 1981 Census only 3% of the people in the area were employed in professional or managerial type work. The vast majority were working class. Unemployment was particularly high in the area especially amongst young people. In 1981 the unemployment rate was over 30% and for those under the age of 25 was almost 50%, and there is no reason to believe that that situation has changed much in recent years. There was a high proportion of one parent families. The City Planning Department estimated that around 40% of children in the area came from one-parent households. There was also a high proportion of single elderly people, and of the chronically ill. The majority of the population therefore were in low-paid work or existed on state benefits.

Although a fairly high proportion of the people in Richmond Hill lived in privately owned or rented housing, most in the area lived in council accommodation. In Chesham this consisted of a large 1960s estate of multi-storey 'crescents' and deck-access housing which a local inquiry report labelled

'a disaster'. Many of these houses had the familiar problems of damp, condensation, poor heating, broken lifts and doors, and poor security. A government Housing Minister who visited the area concluded that 'living conditions for many inhabitants are quite simply intolerable'. However, more recently built low rise council housing in other parts of the area provided relatively pleasant accommodation for some.

The area has, like London's East End, a history of immigration. Irish immigration was common in the last century, and in the 1950s and 1960s migrants from the Caribbean, mainly Jamaica and Barbados, and Africa settled. There have been relatively few Asian settlers. Most of Milltown's Asian community lives slightly to the west and south of the area. Although some of this community do fall within the southern part of Milltown High's catchment area they prefer to send their children to other schools. Thus a large proportion of the population of Chesham and Richmond Hill are second or even third generation Afro/Caribbean people. Although there was no 'ethnic question' in the 1981 Census and so it is impossible to know the exact number of ethnic minority people, the data from the census does show that just under 30% of the heads of household in the area were born in the New Commonwealth or Pakistan. This is probably a substantial underestimate of the actual size of the ethnic minority population.

Despite a lack of what one local Planning Department report called 'a sense of community' because of its transient and multifarious population there was a range of community facilities in the area, from day care centres to libraries and community education services. For young people these often centred around local youth clubs and pubs. However, the problem of youth unemployment appears to have been particularly serious giving rise to some tension between age groups in the area. As a Planning Department report explains;

Young unemployed people find that motivation in finding work is difficult, and they tend to adopt a different lifestyle. Music and parties until the early hours of the morning creates tensions, both within the home and between neighbours. Many leave home and are rehoused, often in the Crescents.

The area saw quite serious urban disorder during the 'riots' of 1981, and relationships between young people (especially, though not only, black) and the police are still far from harmonious. However, the report quoted above also notes:

...very little racial tension in the area, less than in other areas of Milltown...It seems that racist attitudes among school children, which are brought from home, are decreasing, and children mix regardless of ethnic background. (Milltown City Planning Department 1986)

Milltown High School - Background

The school was purpose built as a neighbourhood 11-18 comprehensive school when the local estate was built in the late 1960s (1). Since then its fortunes have followed a similar course to the estate. It was originally built for about 1300 students, but numbers never got much above 1000. A declining city population and migration out of the area reduced numbers to around 600 by the end of the 1970s. Surplus capacity, especially at 6th form level, was a problem in the city as a whole, and in 1982 the L.E.A. reorganised its 'county' secondary schools. Milltown High became a 6 form (later a 5 form) entry 11-16 school. This reorganisation appears to have been an extremely difficult time in the school's history. Staff numbers were cut and approximately 3/4 of the established teachers were redeployed out of the school and replaced by teachers from other schools in the city, causing enormous upset and confusion amongst staff and students alike.

However, following this reorganisation, because of continuing falling rolls, surplus places in other schools in the city, and the creation of a new Church of England school nearby, the number of students attending Milltown High continued to fall. In 1982 there were just over 500 students on roll, but by 1986 this had fallen to 363 and there were only 52 students in the 1st year, giving rise to rumours of possible closure or amalgamation. Despite this, the L.E.A. claimed it was committed to keeping the school open. It was argued that the places at Milltown High would eventually be needed when Milltown's student population began to rise in the 1990s, and, given the city's commitment to neighbourhood comprehensive schools and equal opportunities, closure was thought inappropriate.

In the few years before I began my field work the school had also suffered from several changes of headteacher. An established head left at the school reorganisation and was replaced by one of the deputies. The new head was very committed to the area and the students, but found the job extremely difficult and left teaching altogether after only a year. A deputy stood in as acting head for a term before the present head, David Benyon, was appointed in April 1984.

Despite its low student numbers the school was generously staffed. The L.E.A. had decided that schools faced with falling numbers should be staffed on the basis of the number of teachers required to maintain a viable comprehensive

school curriculum and this was estimated at 40 staff giving a staff/student ratio of 1:9 in 1985/6, the envy of many schools in the city. Thus the school was protected by a relatively 'enlightened' L.E.A. from the extreme, immediate problems caused by falling rolls (c.f. Ball 1984), though it clearly had suffered in the past through the trauma of a school reorganisation, and many thought it was likely to suffer again in the future (2).

A minority of the staff (11 out of 40 in 1985/6) remained from pre-reorganisation times. Some were committed to the school and had chosen to stay, others, however, were forced to stay even though they wanted to move. In the 'all-out, all-in' policy that the L.E.A. adopted at the reorganisation in which all county secondary school teachers 'lost' their jobs and could reapply for any job in the new sixth form colleges or schools, Milltown High, along with several other inner city schools, proved difficult to staff. Few teachers applied for jobs at the school and a number of posts were filled by allocating unwilling staff. Some younger, ambitious staff took the opportunity to gain promotion and volunteered to work at the school. All this seems to have compounded the problems that the school faced because of the reorganisation itself. More recent arrivals amongst the staff had come to the school for a variety of reasons. Some were politically committed to the education of working class students and were attracted by the school's somewhat 'radical' and 'innovatory' image, others came for promotion with little intention of staying long, others simply because they wanted work or the experience of an 'inner city, multi-ethnic school'. But whilst the school did not suffer from a high teacher turnover it was not easy for it to recruit staff (see chapter 9).

'Finding' students was also difficult. The school was officially linked to seven local primary schools and students from these schools were guaranteed a place at Milltown High. However, in practice only about 1/3 of these students eventually went to Milltown High. Thus of the 162 students in Milltown High's 'feeder' primary schools in July 1986 only 52 came to the school in September. The procedures introduced in the 1980 Education Act gave parents increased rights to choose their child's secondary school, and the surplus spaces in many Milltown secondary schools (including church schools) gave them increased opportunities to exercise these rights. Many parents chose to send their children to what they regarded as 'better' schools elsewhere in Milltown, and there was very little that the L.E.A. could do to stop this. If a school had spare places it could fill them and popular schools were only too pleased to do

so. Keeping numbers up preserved jobs for their staff and their reputation in what had become a highly status conscious system (see chapter 9). Milltown High, for a variety of reasons - its location in a run-down inner city estate, the antics of some of its more boisterous students in the local area, and its relatively poor performance in the local exam results league (3) - meant it had developed a very poor standing in this local school status system. One might speculate that the racism of some parents was also influential. Certainly a considerable number of white parents in the catchment area sent their children to other schools, and during my field work a group of white parents at one of the 'feeder' primary schools organised a campaign to have their school 'linked' to another secondary school. But their espoused concerns were with exam results and school discipline, and it is difficult to tell if they were motivated by racism (4). It is important to note that a significant number of ethnic minority parents also sent their children to other schools.

What happened was that the allocation process was exploited in different ways by different ethnic and residential groups. Asian and white parents living in the south of the catchment area were more likely to send their children to other schools than the white and Afro/Caribbean parents in the centre and north. As a result the ethnic make up of Milltown High became more dominated by Afro/Caribbean students than would have been the case if all the children from the linked primary schools had come to the school. At Easter 1985 51.2% of the school's students were of Afro/Caribbean origin, 41.7% were White, and 5.9% of Asian origin; the remaining 1.2% were from a variety of other groups (5). The vast majority of the students had parents in manual occupations or their parents were unemployed. The students' social class backgrounds were in this sense fairly uniform.

Before describing the basic organisation of the school I should perhaps mention the teachers' industrial action which affected the school and my field work quite seriously. This action was in full swing as I began field work and continued throughout in some form or another. In fact a form of local 'work to rule' continued a long time after the national dispute mellowed. All through the year there were regular one and half day strikes and members of one teaching union for almost a full term called 'lightning' half hour strikes throughout the teaching day. Individual members would leave the building for half an hour. Sometimes up to 12 different teachers would be called out at different times. The deputy head responsible for covering staff absences would be informed first

thing in the morning which staff would be out on strike that particular day. In addition all the union members refused to take classes for colleagues who were absent through illness or strike action, refused to supervise school meals or extra curricular activities, and had banned curriculum development work and work outside school hours.

The teachers were taking official union action in pursuit of a long overdue pay claim and review of salary structures, but their action had many implications for the way the school was run and the social processes which occurred. The industrial action was clearly extremely disruptive of 'normal' school practices. The school was often closed. When staff were absent supply staff had to be found. This was not always possible and so students had to be sent home, sometimes in the middle of a morning or afternoon. It was often not possible to give parents notice since the deputy in charge of cover (who often spent a large amount of time attempting to contact supply staff) would not know until the morning which staff were absent, which on strike and how many supply staff she could call on. Students were usually quite simply given a letter to take home and escorted off the premises. The result on one or two occasions when several classes were sent home at the same time was chaotic, with students milling around the building and teachers not knowing who should be in lessons and who going home. In practice many students did not go home, but hung around the school, local youth centre, or nearby shopping precinct and sometimes got into trouble with local residents and shop keepers. Lunch hours were particularly difficult for the head, David Benyon, as he was expected to supervise school meals, to which a large proportion of the students were entitled, by himself. On one occasion trouble in the dining room resulted in a ban on school meals and the students were for a time given packed lunches and seen off the school premises which then remained locked for the lunch hour.

For most of the year of my field work there were no extra curricular activities for students, no games or football matches, clubs or trips, plays or special events. Teachers taught their lessons then retreated to the staffroom or left promptly for home. This saddened and depressed many as it seemed to them that much of the 'life' which revolved around school had disappeared. Indeed, many of the activities and events which are central to the 'community life' of a school, that build a sense of loyalty and solidarity, were sadly lacking. This further disenchanted and alienated many students who at the best of times were difficult to motivate. Truancy rates became high and attendance plummeted. In

1985/86 average school attendance was below 70% for every month except September, and in one month actually fell below 60%. For the older students rates were even lower. These figures also took no account of 'lesson' truancy, when students registered for school and then skipped lessons, something which was common amongst older students. A considerable number of 4th and 5th year students basically chose what lessons they wanted to go to and 'wagged' the rest. In effect they constructed their own timetables. Of course, this was not just due to the industrial action, many students were alienated anyway by their poor future employment prospects and relative failure at school (amongst other factors), but it was made more extreme by the action. It also contributed to the problem of order in classrooms and around the school, a problem which was never far from the surface at Milltown High.

In addition the school became difficult to manage in the way David Benyon wanted to do, as I shall explain in chapter 4. He was faced with many dilemmas as he sought to change the school through what he hoped would be a process of consultation, discussion and team planning. Significant from the point of view of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education was the fact that no meetings with parents could be held outside of school hours which in effect meant contact between parents and school was reduced to almost nil, except in disciplinary cases where students were sent home after some misdemeanor until their parents came into school. In this climate a notion of involving parents more closely in their children's education was almost a non-starter.

School Social Structure and Organisation

Teachers and students

The school was housed in a large modern two (in places three) storey building typical of many new 1960s comprehensive schools. It was surrounded by playing fields and looked out onto the local deck-access estate. Inside it was subdivided into sets of rooms which 'belonged' to subject departments, four large 'house' rooms (one of which had become a drama room) which also served as dining areas, a main assembly hall, staffroom, library and an administrative area which included the school office and head and deputies' rooms. Because the school had surplus space one area was locked off and used as an L.E.A. computer store.

As Burgess (1983) notes the division and control of territory within a school gives a clear indication of aspects of its social structure. Indeed, the control of space, its use and access to it, is one of the key aspects of a school's 'hidden curriculum'. As with most schools there were marked differences between staff and students at Milltown High, showing clearly the power differential between them. Staff had rights to keys, the most useful being a 'master' key, which could secure access to most areas of the school. If a student possessed such a key it was assumed it was stolen and was a 'very serious offence'. Instruction in the protection of one's master key formed one of the first socialisation experiences for new staff

In fact the bulk of the space in the school 'belonged' to the teachers. Classrooms were referred to as Mrs.Green's room or Mr.Smith's lab, senior staff had their offices, and there was the staff room. Even more communal areas such as corridors were thought of as belonging to teachers; there was 'the English' or 'the Art department corridor', and this was formalised when departments were given responsibility for maintaining their areas by keeping them free of graffiti and putting up posters. And 'house' rooms (in which the students could socialise at break times) were regarded as Mr.Mills's or Mr.Mellor's. The only concession to this pattern was the attempt with the new first year integrated curriculum to create a 'home base' which the students would regard more as their own. In practice, however, the situation was little different as the teachers controlled access to and use of the 'home base'. Apart from an

adjoining youth centre which could be used at lunchtimes and after school, the toilets represented the only real area of student control and these were the centre of the various, sometimes illicit, activities that characterised their cultural world. However, even they became subject to fairly rigid teacher control as, following an act of vandalism, they were locked and only opened when a teacher was supervising nearby.

Teachers also controlled access to space. They locked and unlocked doors to classrooms, corridors, 'house rooms', the library, etc. when they deemed it appropriate. At times decided by them individual classrooms or whole areas of the school were blocked off and access forbidden. Students had to 'walk round' while staff were ensured access by possession of their master key. Access to some areas could be negotiated by students though it was granted only on the teachers' terms and usually only when a teacher was in surveillance. Other areas, such as the staffroom were strictly inaccessible to students. The ritual of knocking and waiting at the staffroom door, thus indicating deference to teacher rights and power over this space, had to be observed. Teachers also controlled student movements within school space. They supervised the entry to and exit from classrooms, to and from assembly, movement along corridors, and they shepherded students into 'house rooms' at breaktimes and 'safely' off the premises at the end of school. They also controlled the use of space. Classrooms were for the activities they prescribed, corridors were for walking along from lesson to lesson not for hanging about and socialising in, and the assembly hall was for sitting quietly and listening to the headteacher. Even in social areas student activities were subject to surveillance and control.

The same difference between teacher and student status and power was evident in the temporal structure of the school. Teachers controlled the distribution and use of time within the institution. They decided the 'timetable' which governed the temporal cycle of the school day, week and year and the allocation of resources in time. They decided what activities were appropriate at what time. Students were given their timetables which told them when lessons began and ended, which lesson followed which and how long breaks were. They were told how much time they had to go from one part of the building to another and at what time they should do various lesson activities. Moreover, students frequently had to account for their use of time, and 'wasting time' was regarded as a serious misdemeanour.

Teachers also dominated most other areas of school life. The selection of the knowledge that was deemed worthy of transmission and reception, (i.e. the curriculum), was almost completely in their hands, as were decisions about the means of transmitting that knowledge (i.e. pedagogy). Teachers also decided on the methods of grouping students which, especially in the upper years, reflected their judgments about students' academic and behavioural status. They decided the criteria on which students were granted varying degrees of status and reward or punishment, and they controlled the allocation of students to different levels of the school and classroom status systems. In fact the whole normative structure of the school lay in the hands of the teachers. This was despite the fact that there appeared (in comparison to my own school days as a pupil) to be a much more egalitarian atmosphere in the school and a humanising of social relationships. Teachers dressed casually with few of the old trappings of status (no gowns or suits), as did the majority of students (there was a school uniform but it was not rigorously enforced), and often the social interactions between teachers and students were relaxed and informal. These, however, were changes mainly in surface features. Basic differences of status and relationships of domination and subordination remained the same.

However, there were a few exceptions to this pattern. An innovative scheme called the 'Alternative Curriculum' introduced in 1986 for a small group of 5th year students did attempt to introduce more flexible curriculum patterns based upon 'negotiation' between teacher and student. This group were selected out because it was thought that for them the mainstream curriculum had largely failed. David Benyon regarded this scheme as something of a 'pilot' and hoped that it would eventually lead to changes for all students. Some teachers in the English and Integrated Curriculum departments also tried to increase student control over curriculum content and certain work patterns.

In most areas teachers dominated the social and political structure of Milltown High school and in this respect it was little different from the vast majority of other schools. What then were the nature of the values underlying the normative structure they created? It was certainly not what Lacey (1974) called a 'pressured academic environment', and which Ball (1981) argued characterised Beachside Comprehensive school. Although examination results and working hard academically were regarded as important, they were not given a major emphasis by the head or senior staff in assemblies nor, I was told, in discussions with heads of department (6). The school did not have the

characteristic rituals of prize givings and speech days in which past and present academic successes were highlighted. Nor were past or present academically successful students often held up as role models. Students were not streamed or banded and therefore an academic hierarchy to which they could aspire was not made obviously apparent, and the majority of teachers deliberately played down academic differentiation (see chapter 8). Moreover, the head, although again he recognised the importance of paper qualifications, was interested in broader educational aims (see chapter 4). In fact what can best be described as a liberal egalitarianism rather than an academic elitism characterised the school. Although the head was criticised by some for this lack of academic emphasis, the majority of teachers agreed that to place undue emphasis on a narrow notion of 'achievement' would result in the demotivation of many of the school's students who were not very successful academically. Thus assessment grades were given for 'effort' more than 'achievement', and 'merit marks' for 'good behaviour' more than high standards of academic work. Indeed, as social control was often difficult to maintain at Milltown High (see chapter 9) 'good behaviour' and social responsibility were more heavily emphasised values. I do not want to give the impression here that the value structure at Milltown High was totally non-academic. It was not. But it tended to de-emphasise the academic and stress the importance of other qualities.

Divisions of status and power, the fact that teacher and student interests frequently diverge, and the compulsory nature of schooling, of course mean that much school life is characterised by conflict (see Waller 1932). Whilst many students espouse an acceptance of school rules and teacher authority, few conform totally to teachers' definitions. Most resist some aspect of their schooling even if only passively. Given the frequent value difference between working class students and their middle class teachers this is perhaps especially true of schools for the urban working class (Grace 1978). Conflict was never far from the surface at Milltown High.

Teacher control of space was frequently challenged and subverted at Milltown High. Classrooms and other forbidden areas, like the assembly hall, were sneaked into, locked doors broken, walls grafittied, closed windows smashed, master keys stolen and the assembly hall stage hidden under. The staffroom door was banged on or flung open, corridors became places for hanging about and socialising, as did classrooms if the time was right and the teacher 'soft'. There were endless small ways in which students sought in their

everyday action to redefine school space as 'theirs', for their purposes (such as 'having a laugh' or 'messing about' (Willis 1977, Woods 1979)) and to suit their interests. In the same way they challenged teacher control and definition of time. Students would frequently arrive late for lessons, or redefine parts of lessons, thus extending their possession of time. 'Wagging it' i.e. truanting, either for the whole school day or for certain lessons, was common especially amongst the older students. School resources could also be redefined. Writing paper could become paper aeroplanes and pencils lethal missiles. Curriculum and pedagogy could be redefined, as when a teacher's serious point of knowledge was converted into a class joke or when a teacher's 'group discussion' became an excuse to discuss the local football team's performance. Indeed, student subversion of 'official' teacher prescribed curriculum and pedagogy is often one of the most conservative forces in teaching. Experienced teachers are reluctant to try new methods because they know the power of students to redefine their best intentions when teacher control is weakened. As Hargreaves (1967) and Lacey (1970) showed students can also redefine teachers' criteria of status by creating alternative status forms rooted in their own anti-school sub-cultures. Status here can be achieved by academic failure rather than success and poor behaviour rather than conformity. This was certainly the case at Milltown High. Although there was no clearly identifiable anti-school group of the type described by Hargreaves, anti-school attitudes were common and students often aspired to norms and values which were in opposition to those sponsored by the teachers.

I do not want to suggest that every moment of the day at Milltown High was fraught with conflict. There were times when relationships between teachers and students were extremely cooperative and friendly. But, as Beynon (1985) points out there are quiet times and negotiations in any guerilla war, and the insurgents will only chose overt conflict when they sense the dominant forces are weak. At Milltown High the basic conflictual nature of schooling was more evident than at other schools I am familiar with. As Grace (1978) notes, schools for the urban working class have tended to be sites not just of generational and institutional conflict, but of class conflict. Indeed it has been argued by some (Willis 1977, Weis 1985) that such schools are important sites for the reproduction of a culture of resistance amongst the working class. As I will explain in chapter 9 the 'resistance' of some students had

significant consequences for the educational experiences of all the students at Milltown High.

The Teachers - Departments and Schools

School territory is also a good indicator of the structural divisions in the teachers' world in a school. Milltown High was again similar to many other secondary schools in this respect (c.f. Burgess 1983). It was sub-divided into subject departments each possessing their own suite of rooms and responsibility for knowledge transmission in the different areas of the curriculum. These departments were in fact the basic structural units of the school. All teachers (except the head) 'belonged', to one degree or another, to one of the departments, and their jobs within the departments were defined by detailed job descriptions. They provided strong subject sub-cultures (see chapters 6 and 7) within which school reality and job descriptions were interpreted and defined. These sub-cultures consisted of negotiated subject 'paradigms' and 'pedagogies' (Ball and Lacey 1980) into which new teachers were socialised. They advanced different definitions of school life with sometimes noticeably different norms and expectations to which students were expected to conform. Whilst the head sought to influence these sub-cultures and could control their size and status he was relatively powerless in terms of their internal organisation. The departments enjoyed considerable autonomy in this respect to organise their curriculum, pedagogic and normative features (within limits provided by the head and various external constraints).

The various departments assumed different degrees of status in the school. Although the ethos of Milltown High did not place great overt emphasis on 'the academic' it was the traditional academic subject departments that were the highest status. The English, Maths, Science and Humanities (History, Geography and Religious Education were not taught separately) departments all enjoyed larger numbers of staff, big room allocations, more timetable time, and a large share of resources. These subjects were regarded as the 'core' curriculum and therefore all students in every year had to take them. The departments were all headed by a scale 4 teacher and had comparatively large allocations of scale points, and they formed strong subject sub-cultures based on their own physical areas of the school and frequently their own staffrooms. An area that was growing in status was the new Integrated Curriculum. The core subjects (except Science) in year one, and in year two as well in September 1986, had been amalgamated to form the Integrated Curriculum department. During my field

work this department moved into a large, newly furnished suite of rooms adjacent to the library (which involved the movement of a more 'minor' department - Business Studies). Staff and points allocation increased rapidly, to the displeasure of some of the established heads of department who saw their status and responsibilities being eroded. It had begun to establish its own distinctive subject sub-culture largely based around a 'progressive' or 'developmental' pedagogy characteristic of many primary or middle schools (A.Hargreaves 1986)

At the opposite end of the subject status hierarchy was a department like Social Education which had no head of department (three teachers seemed to think they were 'in charge' of Social Education), no room allocation, a floating staff largely collected from those who had gaps on their timetable and were willing to 'have a go', limited resources, a timetable allocation of only one lesson per week, and no established subject paradigm or pedagogy. Other subject departments - Art, Music, Drama, P.E., Languages, and the Craft subjects - lay in between these two extremes.

Competition for status, and the control of space and resources that this led to, was a common feature of the internal political life of Milltown High school. When status or its associated trappings were threatened or taken away, as when the P.E. department were told that their subject would become an option in the 4th and 5th year because of the introduction of the 'Alternative Curriculum', they were often fiercely defended. The members of the P.E. department in this case appealed outside the school to their local subject inspector for support and one threatened resignation. As resources became scarcer and as the school contracted this competition inevitably was becoming fiercer.

The other basic unit of organisation at Milltown High was the 'pastoral care' system. At the schools' reorganisation in 1982 the new heads were given the opportunity to create 'new' schools. Little guidance from the L.E.A. was given, although a group of local inspectors and heads got together to produce a document outlining several potential organisational models. These incidentally did not provide any particularly radical departure from existing practice (c.f. A.Hargreaves 1981), nor did they provide any advice on certain crucial issues of school organisation such as ability grouping or school decision making (Milltown L.E.A. 1982). Most of the 'new' heads were in fact already heads and relied on their established and fairly traditional

conceptions of 'good' school organisation. Although a new head was appointed at Milltown High in 1982 he based his plans very much on previous patterns. He continued with the subject department system described above, and decided also to retain the school's 'house' system (c.f. Burgess 1983). Students were divided into one of three houses led by a 'head of house', all of whom were senior teachers, and houses were responsible for all aspects of pastoral care and discipline. Most teachers belonged to a house and acted as 'tutors' of a group of students, in theory, though rarely in practice, for the whole of the students' school careers. As in the school studied by Burgess (1983), the houses were intended to provide a unit of allegiance which would breakdown the potential anonymity of the large school and an arena in which school norms and values could be more effectively conveyed and maintained.

However, in 1985 the house system was abandoned, mainly at David Benyon's instigation, in favour of a 'year' system. This change was largely the result of the school's contraction which was making a house system increasingly impractical, though it was also a product of David Benyon's wider educational philosophy and his vision of the school he wanted to move towards (see chapter 4). Unfortunately it was not possible to have five heads of year and so the heads of house became heads of three 'schools' i.e. upper school - year 5, middle school - years 3 and 4, and lower school - years 1 and 2. Their responsibilities remained the same, except that the head of upper school assumed responsibility for careers and liaising with post-school institutions and the head of lower school took on the Integrated Curriculum department when the teacher who David Benyon had intended to head that department left the school. The function of the new 'schools' were also similar to the old 'houses'.

Whilst heads of school and tutors both had written job descriptions they all interpreted and defined their roles somewhat differently. With the heads of school this was largely a difference in emphasis and style, one adopting what he described as a more 'formal' approach, another preferring a 'counselling' role. However, despite much of the rhetoric of 'pastoral care' which implies that such personnel in schools are largely concerned with issues of personal care, guidance and individual emotional and social problems, much of the time of the heads of school at Milltown High was spent dealing with disciplinary matters and issues of social control (c.f. Denscombe 1985). Indeed in the minds of many staff providing the 'appropriate' support in these matters was the

essential aspect of their role. It was the heads of school (or the deputy head responsible for pastoral care) that they turned to for support when their classroom control was threatened and when their authority was challenged, by referring individual students or sometimes whole classes to them. In the large departments this was sometimes done after consultation with the head of department, but even here it was more usual for staff to go directly to a head of school or the deputy. In fact the most serious area of dispute between subject teachers and heads of school was over the issue of what was 'appropriate' action in disciplinary matters. Some staff thought the heads of school 'soft' and accused them of being ineffective in dealing with students who were disruptive and threatening the social fabric of the school. They maintained that they needed more support in dealing with such students. Heads of year replied that their hands were tied by the bureaucracy of the system, the inadequate resources and support services, the lack of special out-of-school provision, and their own limited time and powers.

There was a much wider difference in the ways that class tutors defined their role. A minority of tutors, especially those in the Integrated Curriculum and English departments, regarded their tutorial responsibilities as an extremely important aspect of their role. They would attempt to ascertain and deal with any problems that a student might have, spend time in counselling individual students, take responsibility for dealing with disciplinary incidents that their students got involved in (which with some classes were many) and visit students' homes. They interpreted their tutorial role widely, often building up a clear identification with their class. But others, the majority of teachers in fact, had a narrower interpretation. Some did little more than mark the registers in the morning and afternoon.

There were several reasons for this variety of interpretation of the tutorial role. Some staff explained to me that they just did not see their role in terms of pastoral care. They were subject teachers 'not social workers' as one said, that was what they had been trained to do, and that was what they wanted to continue doing. In this sense their lack of enthusiasm stemmed partly from their own subject-dominated training, but also from their own identity as teachers which revolved around their subjects. Unsurprisingly the ones that talked in this way were generally university rather than college trained. A second reason is that the tutorial divisions in the school were far less clear and significant in terms of the allocation of space, time, resources,

etc. than were the subject divisions. The 'schools' did not form clearly defined geographical units as did the subjects (except the lower school which was developing along these lines with the Integrated Curriculum). Although there were 'house rooms' (still called 'house rooms' by staff and students) few staff used them. Moreover, few activities revolved around the 'schools', especially since the industrial action. They did not meet regularly; 'school' meetings were held approximately once a term, whereas members of departments met informally every day. They did not provide teachers with their basic means of executing their job of classroom teaching, their curriculum, pedagogy and resources. In short, the 'schools' did not provide the basic sub-cultures to which staff at Milltown High were attached and owed their allegiance, which the subject departments did. Again the development of the Integrated Curriculum/Lower School set up was becoming the exception here. Thus there was little opportunity or incentive to negotiate a common interpretation of the tutorial role in this system or for collective expectations to develop, though this was beginning to occur in the Integrated Curriculum.

Thus it was the subject departments that provided the more significant unit of school organisation for the staff. The same was true for the students. Although they registered with their tutor and on occasions developed close relationships with them, the only activities that took them physically and socially into the 'schools' was the once a week 'school'/year assembly (usually assemblies were held for each year) and their lunch which had largely ceased to be a school affair anyway as no teachers attended. Very few activities were organised around the 'schools' to the disappointment of many staff and students who remembered the old 'house' system. This was partly because of the industrial action, but also because heads of school and tutors appeared unwilling to direct their energies in this direction. As a result students gave less allegiance to their 'school' than they had done to their 'houses'. Thus, unlike the houses in the school studied by Burgess (1983) the 'schools' did not form significant sub-divisions redefining and reinterpreting school norms and procedures, but of course it must be remembered that Milltown High was a very much smaller institution.

This difference between the significance of subject and pastoral divisions in the school was somewhat paradoxical given the fact that the new head in 1982 had established a system which appeared to give a degree of priority to the pastoral over the academic. He maintained that the 'heads of

house' were the king pins in the institution and had appointed them on senior teacher scales, and they, together with the three deputies, constituted the 'senior management team'. This was part of the system that David Benyon inherited when he arrived in the school in April 1984.

Some mention should be made here of the role of 'Section 11' teachers in the school. In addition to its normal staffing complement, Milltown High was entitled to three extra teachers financed from money provided to the L.E.A. under Section 11 of the 1966 Local Government Act. This money is made available so that L.E.A.s can make special provision for students of 'Commonwealth immigrant' origin 'whose language and customs differ from those of the rest of the community'. Before the 1985/86 academic year such teachers at Milltown High, as at most other schools, were not identifiable individuals. The extra entitlement had merely been used to increase the overall school staffing level. As a previous head of the school said, 'they were 3/40ths of everyone'. However, following a change in Home Office requirements in 1985, Section 11 staff had to be identifiable and their roles clearly defined. This stipulation filtered down to school level during the 1985/86^{year} and a small number of staff had all or part of their timetables hurriedly designated Section 11 time. In September 1986 three teachers on the staff were more carefully selected. They formed a 'Section 11 department' and were given their own base to work from. It was, however, difficult for them to establish quickly a coherent set of working norms and well defined roles. Although the L.E.A. provided some INSET for them, with similarly designated teachers in other schools, clear guidance as to exactly what or how they were supposed to work to cater for the needs of ethnic minority students was not forthcoming. They, with David Benyon's assistance, were left to interpret their role within rather broad Home Office guidelines. This was especially difficult as they faced pressure from a number of local black community workers who complained about lack of consultation, and from a number of staff who were sceptical about the nature of their task. I will describe the limited moves the three teachers had made by the time I completed my field work in chapter 5.

School Management and Politics

I will discuss some issues related to school politics again in chapter 4, but I want to provide a some basic details here. Milltown High school had a

fairly traditional staff hierarchy headed by David Benyon, three deputies, and three heads of school/year. One deputy was responsible for staff development, exams and community links, another for the pastoral care system, cover, duties, and the school's policy on Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education, and the third for the curriculum, INSET, buildings and the development of Equal Opportunities Policies (this meant Anti-Sexist work). Although more junior staff, heads of department and scale 1 and 2 teachers had written job descriptions which were contained in the staff file and given to staff at the beginning of each academic year, the senior staff did not operate in a strongly directive or supervisory way. There was no formal system of staff appraisal in the school and most teachers were permitted a degree of autonomy under the wing of their head of department. An atmosphere of what might be called laissez-faire professionalism seemed to be the norm. On the whole senior staff did not interfere with the everyday running of the departments or the 'schools'. Departments on the whole operated co-operatively and curriculum and pedagogy were collectively negotiated rather than rigidly defined by the head of department.

In terms of in-school politics, despite David Benyon's theoretical commitment to a participatory style, the school was largely dominated by its 'senior management team' led by the head. But even so, and surprisingly in view of the industrial action, a variety of meetings, both formal and informal, were held (7). All school staff met briefly each morning for 5 minutes in the staffroom and David Benyon and other senior staff would bring everyone upto date with news about various events, student suspensions, new procedures, and important things or students to look out for. The head would also sometimes re-emphasise the importance of certain practices and procedures, using the opportunity to define how he expected staff to work. These meetings did not involve staff discussion or debate.

Full staff meetings were held about once a month. These took different forms. At the beginning of each term there would be a staff meeting with the agenda set fairly heavily by David Benyon, although staff could ask to speak beforehand about a new scheme or special project they had planned. Usually David Benyon introduced new staff, brought staff up to date on issues such as staffing and finance, and provided information about plans, priorities, and new procedures. He also emphasised existing procedures, staff roles and job descriptions, and explained the way he wanted staff to perform their roles,

and he sometimes attempted to boost staff morale through what can best be described as a 'pep' talk and an emphasis on collective responsibility and 'team work'. In these meetings he defined how he wanted the school to run and there was little opportunity for debate or discussion.

More open staff meetings were also held, usually on particular issues. Sometimes these related to proposed changes in school structure and organisation, sometimes to issues of concern which emerged during the term. It was possible for staff to make suggestions for the agenda of these meetings, but few did, and it was clear that issues which did not conform to David Benyon's or the senior staff's view of the 'way we are going' would not be placed on the agenda. At one head of department meeting, for example, a teacher proposed that the whole issue of mixed ability grouping be considered by the staff as he felt that it was not working well. This was quickly ruled out by a deputy head who explained that mixed ability grouping was part of the whole philosophy of the school and that therefore only the pros and cons of different methods of mixed ability teaching could be debated. Moreover, the role and format of these meetings were consultative. As Brooksbank (1980) points out, consultation involves the explanation of proposed change and a willingness to listen and to take account of views expressed, but it does not involve a commitment to change in the direction of those views. They were not meetings at which decisions could be taken. Staff were asked to voice their opinions and as such could perhaps have some influence over the decisions that were taken, but they played no part in the actual process of decision taking. No votes were taken, and the 'real' decisions were made in senior management meetings or by David Benyon himself. Further, in some meetings the large number of issues that staff were asked to consider in the limited time available meant that few staff had the opportunity to participate and discussions were often cut short.

INSET meetings involving the whole staff also took place and sometimes these too provided a forum for the discussion of the application of particular school reforms to Milltown High. This again provided staff with the opportunity to influence school policy and the decision making process. But again although staff could suggest areas of possible INSET, few did, and decisions about which areas were considered were made by the senior management and the head within the bounds of 'our' (i.e. their) 'priorities'.

The senior management team i.e. the head, three deputies, and three heads of school, met usually once each week (although sometimes this was not possible and just the head and deputies met together). Here the important decisions concerning school organisation and structure, procedures, priorities, deployment of staffing, resources, room allocation, scale points, etc., etc. were taken. Again it was theoretically possible for ordinary staff to put forward issues for discussion, but perhaps not surprisingly as they would not be present, few did so. In fact, David Benyon explained to me that few of the senior staff put forward any issues for the agenda either. Thus he was left fairly free to set it himself. Decisions, he maintained, were taken on the basis of a consensus view and other senior staff confirmed this view (8), although some did explain that some decisions were taken to which they were personally opposed. The head also argued that the senior staff were in many respects 'representative' of the staff as a whole and therefore reflected their views at these meetings. This does not of course mean that they were 'representatives' of the staff delegated to putting forward their views, but that they held a similar range of attitudes and opinions to the staff as a whole and because of their close contact with staff in the staffroom, 'schools' and departments they were able to sound out and convey staff views. Whether they in fact fulfilled this role is difficult to say, but the head argued that this was one way in which staff did have a say in the decisions which were taken.

This senior team was of course dominated by the pastoral heads, something which David Benyon wanted to change. This meant that the subject departments, which, as we have seen, were the more significant unit of school organisation, or more correctly their heads, were excluded from the key arena of decision making. There was no 'academic board', which some schools have established, to take or advise on key decisions affecting issues of curriculum or pedagogy. Although David Benyon viewed this as a weakness, as the deputy head in charge of curriculum explained to me, it had the advantage of excluding key 'conservative' elements who had vested interests i.e. the heads of large departments, from decision making, and this was especially important as several of the major curriculum decisions, for example the introduction of Integrated Curriculum and the Alternative Curriculum, involved the reduction in status or resources of the large departments. The heads of Maths, English, and Humanities were not involved in the decision to extend the Integrated

Curriculum into the 2nd year, which they all opposed, and the head of P.E. was not involved in the decision to remove P.E. from the core curriculum in the 4th and 5th year as part of the Alternative Curriculum, an idea which he opposed. Whilst the head maintained that these staff had been consulted and he was aware of their views (although the head of P.E. disputed this) their exclusion from the basic decision making forum reduced their influence and eliminated the possibility of their exercising any veto. As one staffroom conspiracy theorist pointed out, the head was surrounded by 'yes men'.

At the beginning of my field work it appeared that heads of department met quite regularly. Indeed two meetings were called by the deputy head responsible for curriculum in the first half term, one of the heads of 'major' departments - Maths, English, Science, Humanities. P.E. and Languages, and one of all heads of department, which included all the smaller subjects which in several cases were one person departments. But after this these meetings were comparatively rare. The deputy concerned explain that she was new to her job (see chapter 4) and had not realised that these meetings could become rather 'long winded' and in her opinion not particularly constructive. Also because of the industrial action they had to be held in school time and therefore necessitated sending home several classes of student to release the appropriate staff. They also provided the forum for 'conservative' staff that she wanted to avoid in order to push through the changes to which she and David Benyon were committed. She therefore decided to abandon the meetings and only call them to discuss certain key issues. She attempted to 'consult' staff through informal contacts.

These, then, were the important formal meetings of the staff that were held in the school. It appears from this description that ordinary teachers played little part in the decision making process itself and this was largely the case. But staff could exercise some influence in consultative meetings. They could also exercise influence informally in various ways. David Benyon attempted to maintain an 'open door' policy in which he made himself available either in his office or the staffroom if staff wanted to talk to him. He was always willing to talk and to listen to staff views. Sometimes he or one of the deputies specifically sought out the views of key individuals to gauge their opinion or their response to a specific change which affected them. He also, as I have explained above, hoped that his senior team would partly function to syphon staff views and concerns to him (as well as influencing

themselves). Some staff also wrote their views down on paper in the form of memos and he was always willing to receive these. Indeed, on several occasions during my field work he specifically asked staff to write down their views on certain broad issues. He was, however, invariably disappointed by the lack of response. Some staff, in fact, participated in this informal system of lobbying more than others. There were a variety of reasons for this, but one of course was the extent to which they felt they would be able to affect decisions. If they felt their effect was likely to be limited then there was little incentive to try. In this way influence can become cumulative. What tended to happen was that certain staff, either because they were highly regarded and their opinion was sought or because they chose to be more active in staff politics, were more influential than others, and naturally they tended to be those whose ideas were most in tune with David Benyon's.

But what of other groups outside the staff? In recent years governing bodies have in theory become more powerful. The governing body at Milltown High school included the head (9), governors nominated by the L.E.A. (mainly local concillors and education officers), representatives of linked primary schools, elected parent governors, elected staff (including ancilliary staff) governors and co-opted governors (mainly people who had an interest in or connection with the school). During my field work the governors decided to seek to increase the number of co-opted governors from ethnic minorities, and succeeded in appointing a local community worker thus increasing the Afro/Caribbean representation to three (one Afro/Caribbean parent and two co-opted governors). However, although the governors have the power to question the head and the head is responsible to the governing body, de facto power and authority over the internal workings of the school remain with the head. At Milltown High the governors did not constitute a decision making body except on such issues as suspensions. They questioned and sought to influence, but the key decisions of school policy were made by the head and senior managers.

In an attempt to involve the students more in school politics School Councils had been established with the blessing of David Benyon. Indeed he thought it was important enough to allocate a committed member of staff to the role of organising councils for the different 'schools' on one morning each week. Each student tutor group elected two representatives and meetings were held fortnightly. David Benyon attended when invited and the students were, in theory, able to discuss any aspect of school life they wished. Unlike the head

described by Hunter (1979), David Benyon did not set the agenda of these meetings or use them to deliver long explanations about school policy. However, from a perusal of the minutes of the meetings the students themselves restricted their comments to a number of predictable areas - complaints about school lunches, lack of sporting activities, the small number of school trips, etc. figured highly. In fact, many of the meetings consisted of a string of student complaints to which the teacher in charge responded by either explaining the reasons why the particular item of complaint had occurred or promised to convey student views to the staff and headteacher. To some extent this may have been because of the students' lack of experience and skill, but it was also a result of the basic function which these meetings appeared to perform. They were advisory bodies and therefore functioned to direct student views and discontents along 'appropriate' channels. In fact it could be argued that they acted to defuse student discontent by giving them an 'acceptable' way of voicing their opinions, although it is difficult to establish if this was the case. The student councils did seem to give students a marginally greater influence over school policy and it gave those who took part an experience of elections and formal meetings, but they did not give students a part in the actual decision making system itself. Decisions made were restricted to largely non-controversial issues such as which video to have at the school party.

Thus although there were consultation processes and means by which junior staff and students at Milltown High could influence school decision making, power remained largely in the hands of the headteacher and his senior staff.

Footnotes

- 1) The L.E.A. moved to a comprehensive secondary system at the same time.
- 2) Milltown L.E.A. had over recent years managed to maintain its relatively high level of expenditure on schools and local services, but at the time of writing (summer/autumn 1987) it had just been 'rate capped' and many in the city anticipated severe financial restrictions in future years. A strong reminder, if we needed one, that L.E.A.s do not operate in isolation from the wider economic and political systems.
- 3) The 1980 Education Act required all schools to publish their exam results in their school brochure. In Milltown the local press ensured considerable publicity was given to these results.
- 4) I did little systematic research on parents views of the school. I did, however, speak to all the headteachers of Milltown High's 'feeder' primary schools. They argued that the most significant factor in parental choice of secondary school was a rather generalised image of schools which parents received from local gossip and from the appearance and behaviour of a school's students in the area. Concern about 'standards' and 'discipline' were paramount. They maintained that whilst most parents in the area were happy to send their child to a local primary school, they were less happy with their designated secondary school, because of its location and its perceived 'low academic standard and poor discipline'. Secondary schools outside the area were generally perceived as superior.
- 5) The school did not as a matter of policy collect information on student ethnic backgrounds (see my concluding chapter), but in complying with new Home Office and L.E.A. requirements in order to retain its three section 11 teachers the deputy head in charge of pastoral care with the help of heads of year/school allocated students to one of the three ethnic groups above. In order to confirm this data I checked with form tutors and heads of year/school. It was apparent from their comments and my own observations that several students were of mixed Afro/Caribbean/white origin. I decided that for

the purpose of my analysis I would classify them as Afro/Caribbean. This, I realise, may not always be appropriate, but from talking to many of the students it seemed that most (but not all) regarded themselves as Afro/Caribbean, and I would maintain that for the most part they would be treated as such by white society and by any teachers who responded to students on this basis.

6) The head came under very little pressure from parents in this respect.

7) In order to have formal meetings it was often necessary to end school early and send students home, something which David Benyon had obtained unofficial L.E.A. 'permission' to do. He was placed in the dilemma of wanting to encourage staff participation in school decision making by having meetings, but not wanting to send students home. In view of the changes he wanted to initiate (see chapter 4) he erred on the side of meetings. This was something which several staff protested about, and it was an issue upon which parents were not consulted and remained largely silent.

8) I only observed one of these meetings and no minutes of the meetings were available so I am relying on the views of the various participants here.

9) When I began field work he was not a governor, although of course he went to and participated at governors meetings. He later chose to become a governor.

Chapter Three

The Development of L.E.A. and School Policy on Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education.

Introduction

This chapter will first briefly review the the history of Milltown L.E.A.'s policy on Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education. This review relies heavily on the work conducted during the first stage of the Education Team's research by Barry Troyna. At the same time as the L.E.A. was developing its policies Milltown High School was reviewing its approaches. I have therefore attempted to trace the history of Milltown High's engagement with the issue of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education, to describe why and how the school developed its own policies in the late 1970's and early 1980's and examine how these related to what was happening at the L.E.A. level.

In this reconstruction of school policy development, I address the following questions - Why did Milltown High School begin to consider the issue of Multicultural Education in the late 1970's and Anti-Racist Education in the 1980's? Why was it one of the first schools in the L.E.A. (if not in the country as a whole) to do so? How was policy made and by whom? What were the major parameters of the debates that occurred in the school? What particular definitions of Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism were adopted and why? To what extent was the process of policy development in the school influenced by or influence that which was going on in the L.E.A. itself?

As this was a historical exercise I inevitably had to rely for data on the recollections of staff and others involved and on remaining documentary sources. I interviewed several members of staff who had been in the school since the mid-1970's, one of whom had worked on the school's working party on Multicultural Education which had conducted a detailed study and debate about Multicultural Education in the late 1970s. I also interviewed two ex-members of staff who had participated on the working party, the deputy head who chaired the working party (and later became the school's head), and the headteacher between 1977 and 1982. I also examined various school brochures, policy publications, and the report of the school's working party. Unfortunately there were no minutes remaining from meetings concerning these issues and so I had to rely more than I would have liked on the memories of those involved.

Policy Development in Milltown L.E.A.

Milltown L.E.A. published a formal policy advocating Multicultural Education in its schools in June 1980. Prior to that the L.E.A. had adopted a generally assimilationist perspective. Its main policy initiatives in relation to the growing number of ethnic minority students in Milltown were designed to ease integration - the provision of in-school ESL, and extra staff and resources in schools with large numbers of ethnic minority students.

However, in the mid-1970s certain L.E.A. officers became unhappy with such an approach. The dissatisfaction voiced by several local minority groups, and the rise of racism represented by the increasing activities of the National Front nationally and locally, led them to believe that the problem was not so much minority youngsters themselves, as racial prejudice and discrimination by the 'host' community. This, they increasingly felt, should become their main target. In 1978 the Chief Education Officer endorsed a Multicultural approach in the city's schools aimed at all students and initiated a process of consultation with local ethnic minority organisations, individuals and L.E.A. schools. This exercise was less than satisfactory. The response from minority groups was limited. Many appeared rather sceptical of the whole process of consultation. The administration of a questionnaire to schools by the local inspectorate was poor and revealed much indifference to the L.E.A.'s proposals. Despite this, in June 1980 the Chief Education Officer submitted a new L.E.A. policy to the appropriate Education sub-committee for resolution, and this became the basis of the policy that was eventually circulated to schools.

The L.E.A.'s policy, entitled 'Education for a Multicultural Society', advocated that all schools should be responsible for educating students for a culturally plural society. The aim was to foster good race relations on the basis of mutual understanding and respect, by valuing and teaching about ethnic minority cultures in school. As Troyna and Ball (1985a - also Troyna and Williams 1986) point out their policy represented what Gibson (1976) has called a 'cultural understanding' approach resting on the assumption that learning about other cultures and life-styles will lead to the reduction in prejudice and discrimination towards people from ethnic minority backgrounds. They note the absence of a specific Anti-Racist commitment from the policy statement and argue that this was because an attempt had been made to avoid a

potentially 'contentious issue' which could have inhibited the policy's approval.

Following the publication of its policy, the L.E.A. adopted a number of strategies to encourage its implementation in local schools. In the early 1980s an Inspector for Multicultural Education was appointed, a small 'Ethnic Studies Unit' staffed by four 'support teachers' was established, the mother tongue teaching programme was expanded, 5 out of its 40 yearly secondments were reserved for staff wishing to learn about Multicultural Education, discussions on a multi-faith Religious Education syllabus were initiated (1), and moves were made to encourage the recruitment of ethnic minority staff. However, Troyna and Ball were critical of many of these initiatives. They argued that they did not involve a substantial reallocation of resources as most of them were financed from extra money that the L.E.A. could claim under Section 11 of the Local Government Act. Initially the newly appointed inspector was left without his own budget, and subsequently was considerably overstretched, being responsible for Multicultural Education in all the city's schools and fulfilling the role of a district inspector as well. The Ethnic Studies Unit teachers were also overstretched, given the unit's ambitious aims, and were restricted in their work to those schools that invited them in. As Troyna and Ball point out these tended to be schools which had a large proportion of ethnic minority students. They quote one respondent who likened their activities to a 'fire brigade service' when what was needed was a 'hit squad'. The expansion in mother tongue teaching was marginal - a 'token gesture' Troyna concludes. The increase in secondments was important, but obviously only affected a small minority of the L.E.A.'s staff. The appointment of more ethnic minority staff was severely constrained by the contraction of the whole education service which resulted in a limited number of appointments from outside and promotion largely restricted to those already employed in the city. All in all, it was unsurprising that, when Troyna and Ball conducted their work in 1983 and 1984 on the impact of the L.E.A.'s policy on local schools, they found that the majority of schools had changed little.

Before my work began, however, there had been a number of significant policy developments and new implementation strategies in the L.E.A.. In response to criticisms of their Multicultural approach from various sources - ethnic minority organisations and individuals, some teachers, and of course the reports of the research team at the Centre - and an increasing awareness

amongst certain officers that their approach was flawed and inadequate, the L.E.A. had begun to move towards a more emphatic commitment to Anti-Racism. In May 1982 the Chief Education Officer wrote to all headteachers asking them to report to the L.E.A. 'serious instances indicative of racial tension' within schools and colleges, to ensure the swift removal of racist graffiti and prevent the distribution of racist literature within schools or at school gates. This request was reiterated in letters to schools in April 1985 and in a circular for staffroom notice boards in 1986. Early in 1985 a short Anti-Racist policy statement was circulated to schools and later to a wider audience in the L.E.A.'s magazine. This latter document emphasised the L.E.A.'s commitment to 'confront and eradicate racism and its damaging effects', its expectations that 'all its employees (will) share this determination...and comply with and actively promote' the values of 'equal rights and opportunities, social justice and mutual respect'. However, this short statement did not specify what the L.E.A. meant by 'racism', how it and its 'effects' could be identified, 'confronted and eradicated' or in what ways its employees should 'actively promote' the values specified. It said nothing about the implications of the principles of Anti-Racism for school organisation and management, for curriculum, pedagogy, teacher-student relations, and appointments policy. In short, in this new commitment the L.E.A. had failed to issue 'specific advice and guidance to teachers on how to operationalise the principle of anti-racism in their professional practice' (Troyna and Ball 1985a) which Troyna and Ball had recommended following their work. However, shortly after this the L.E.A. did begin a process of linking its policy on Anti-Racism to a broader Equal Opportunities Policy. A draft copy of this document, which went further in specifying the nature of racism and the role teachers could play in combatting it and itemising some of the wider implications for school decision making and appointments, was in limited (unofficial) circulation during my field work.

In terms of implementation, whilst continuing the strategies listed above, the L.E.A. had also begun to place a much greater emphasis on its policy in discussions with headteachers, and in its priorities for INSET. In October 1982 the Chief Education Officer wrote to heads requesting that schools produce 'after appropriate consultations with staff (teaching and non-teaching, parents, and governors where appropriate), institutional policies on racism'. This, it was felt, would place the issues firmly on the agenda of local schools.

The L.E.A. also reorganised and expanded the Ethnic Studies Unit into a more broadly based Equal Opportunities Ethnic Minorities Team (2). It also provided heads and school governing bodies with a summary of the Swann Report and asked them to consider and produce policies on English and Community language provision for ethnic minority students.

Whilst I obviously cannot assess the effect of these developments in all L.E.A. schools and comment on their efficacy across the whole L.E.A., this study does enable me to examine their impact on Milltown High School. I now want to examine the approach to these policy issues that this school itself has adopted over the past 15 years.

Policy Development at Milltown High School

The Rise of Multicultural Education

Since its creation in 1967 Milltown High had always catered for a substantial proportion of ethnic minority students. In the late 1960's and early 1970's the school's response was typical of many other schools and L.E.A.s. The philosophy of the head and staff were based on the principles of assimilationism. The then head was 'a very strong secondary modern-type head, who was trying to do his damn best best for the children, but basically trying to make them British' (John Burgess, headteacher 1977-82). Multiculturalism was simply not an issue. 'I got the impression,' said Michael James (who joined the school as deputy head in 1975 and became head in 1982) 'that the school was being run...without any relationship to the fact that there were a wide variety of kids from different ethnic backgrounds. It was being run on traditional comprehensive school lines.' The school provided some EFL teaching for those immigrant children who had recently arrived and who lacked fluency in English, but did little else.

However, in the late 1970's the idea of Multicultural Education became an important area of debate and focus of innovation within the school. Following the appointment of John Burgess as head in 1977, a working party was established, under the chairmanship of Michael James, to tackle the issue of 'what the school needed by virtue of being a multiracial school' (Michael James). This was one of several groups established by the new head to review practices and procedures, but it was by far the longest lasting and, it was maintained by one member of staff, the most influential. Michael James, who was a strong influence on the head's decision to establish and support such a group, was given a free hand to set up and run it. The working party was formed initially from volunteers, but, in order to make it representative of all the subject departments in the school, various members of staff were asked or 'persuaded' to join. As the group met regularly for nearly 3 years its membership actually changed during the course of its work, with only 3 teachers going right the way through. In all 17 teachers were involved from various subject areas and positions of responsibility within the school. The group met fortnightly after school and reviewed academic writing, visited and

reported on other schools, spoke to members of community groups, interviewed school heads of department and finally submitted a report containing an outline of their activities, a rationale for 'Multicultural Education' and a large number of policy recommendations.

Before considering the achievements of this group I think it is important to consider some of the reasons for the emergence of Multicultural Education on the school agenda at this time. Young and Connolly (1981), in their study of the development of local authority policies developed in response to the presence of ethnic minority groups, argued that a key role was played by what they called 'policy entrepreneurs' who were 'the prime movers for change'. They were 'committed to change and... could make skillful use of such pressures from the community or from central agencies as were to hand'. However, Troyna (1984a) views such an approach as no more than a statement of the obvious, that those who were committed to change initiated change. 'What Young and Connolly have failed to do,' he maintains, 'is to reconstruct the course of events, both locally and nationally, which led to these individuals' "commitment to change". What is needed is an account of the context in which individuals were operating in order to fully understand why change of the sort advocated was seen as necessary. In the area of L.E.A. policy making Troyna and Williams (1986) identify a combination of national and local factors which provided the context for the consideration of Multicultural Education as a policy option (see also Rex, Troyna, and Naguib 1983). These included, in the case of the ILA, concern over the threat to social cohesion represented by alienated black youth. There was also increasing concern in the black community in London over the 'underachievement' and disproportionate allocation of black students to ESN schools, which resulted in increasing numbers of black parents sending their children to supplementary schools, and represented a challenge to 'the credibility and stability of Inner London's education service and the Authority's responsibility under the 1944 Education Act to provide a common and inclusive education for all students'. I have already described some of the factors which nudged L.E.A. policy makers into action in Milltown. In short, Troyna and Williams argue, policies were 'reactive', not deriving from 'pedagogical foresight but...impelled by broader and more immediate political and social considerations.'

Was this the case at the school level? What factors and events at Milltown High provided the impetus for the consideration of Multicultural Education as a

strategy for reform? First, I think it is worth stressing that schools are not ideologically static and that new personnel with different biographies, training and educational philosophies often bring new ideas about appropriate educational practice. It is important to consider, therefore, the role of such characters, or 'policy entrepreneurs' as they might be called, as their ideologies clearly influence which areas are identified as in need of change, what changes are deemed appropriate, and, indeed, how external events and pressures are interpreted and responded to. In a sense Troyna and Williams, whilst emphasising the importance of social context in influencing action, have tended to neglect the crucial role of individuals and ideas. At the school level it is important to examine the role of key personnel and their philosophies if we are to understand adequately the emergence of Multicultural Education.

The mid-1970s at Milltown High, as in many other parts of the country, were a time of relatively rapid staff turnover. Several new young staff, trained in the 'radical' educational and social climate of the late 1960's and early 1970s with its emphasis on progressivism and curriculum development, social change and reform, came to the school. They were attracted by the prospect of working in a new, purpose-built comprehensive school which appeared to offer scope for the development of their educational ideals and their own career advancement. Amongst them were teachers committed to a political philosophy of social change who chose to work in the inner city and working class comprehensives because they saw it as part of this wider commitment (3). Some were concerned about inequality and the role of the educational system in reproducing it. They were advocates of a liberal/radical educational ideology which stressed change, curriculum development and integration, and a progressive pedagogy (see Grace 1978). They were keen to become involved in discussions about change and a review of the school's practices many of which they perceived as 'irrelevant', 'outmoded', 'autocratic' and 'traditional'. In fact, they represented an increasingly dominant educational ideology which developed in the 1960s in which innovation was 'the name of the game' (Whiteside 1978), and in which curriculum and pedagogic review was seen by some as the way to create a more just, and by others a more efficient educational system, and therefore a more just or efficient society.

Whilst some of these teachers had already begun to be influential in the school the opportunity to get more involved in such discussions came with the arrival of a new headteacher to his first job as a head in 1977. He believed that to create a 'good' school it was essential for teachers to examine their curriculum to ensure its 'relevance' to the students they taught, and for all practices within the school to be placed under scrutiny and regular review. He also expected all staff to participate. He initiated a number of working groups in the school to consider a wide range of topics - pastoral care, community education, staff appraisal were just three. As one member of staff at the time said:

He introduced a new style of management to the school...and he expected a very high work load with lots of meetings after school...Some people resented it or didn't support it and about a third left in that first year, but there were a lot of us who were very keen to get involved.

The new head had also begun to think about the idea of Multicultural Education and had become aware of the national debate which was moving in this direction through the campaigning work of organisations like the National Association for Multi-Racial Education (NAME). He realised, he said, that, 'here was a tremendous opportunity to do something and for some very odd reason no-one was doing anything about it'. Michael James as deputy head was also beginning to think along the same lines. He was concerned that Milltown High did 'absolutely nothing' in response to the fact that it was a multiethnic school. Moreover, he had a deep and strong concern about the problem of racism. As he said when I interviewed him:

I feel racism is rampant and if schools don't do something pretty forceful about it then it will just run out of control, and if schools aren't in the business of leadership and education they're in nothing.

The atmosphere within the school, with a large group of new, young radical staff, a new head committed to innovation, and a growing awareness amongst senior and some junior staff of the need to examine the issue of Multicultural Education, was ripe for the consideration of change.

But it was not just the ideas of new staff which were important. We do need to consider other pressures which forced the issue of Multicultural Education onto the agenda. We must look at the national and local context in which these teachers were working. As I mentioned above Troyna (see Troyna 1984a, Troyna and Williams 1986) has argued that increasing central and local government concern in the 1970s over the 'problem' of black youth who were alienated from the educational system was one factor which influenced the development of local authority policies (see also Carby 1982). There appears to have been a similar concern at the school level. For a variety of reasons young people, especially working class young people, were becoming less willing to accept their schooling, less willing to defer to the traditional authority of their teachers, and less willing to cooperate with institutional practices (see for example Willis 1977). In some schools the resistance of working class youth provoked a crisis of social control and teachers complained at the 'breakdown of discipline' and 'standards of authority' (see Cox and Boyson 1975). In some areas, notably London, a number of multi-ethnic schools were experiencing mounting difficulties of social control especially with Afro/Caribbean students. Dhondy wrote in 1974 about the 'Black Explosion in Schools' and described the rejection of the school system by mounting numbers of young blacks.

Similar problems were emerging in Milltown secondary schools, notably those in the inner city. As one local teacher put it, 'in some schools it was like sitting on a powder keg. It was just a matter of keeping the lid on'. Suspension and truancy rates increased and the L.E.A. was forced to create two special units for 'difficult pupils' and later a 'Disruption in Schools Support Service'. One local school hit the headlines when a substantial number of Afro/Caribbean students 'rioted' smashing windows and furniture in the school. Whilst Milltown High appears to have avoided such sensational incidents, its teachers faced everyday problems of student resistance, disruption and truancy which were becoming increasingly common in Milltown secondary schools. One teacher who had been at the school since it opened commented:

There was no doubt that throughout the 70s things got more difficult. Kids got more disruptive, less inclined to do as they were told, more likely to give you a mouthful, more likely to wag it, just more likely to be trouble.

It was black and white kids, but because we've always had a lot of black kids here it often seemed more likely to be them.

As a result there was what Michael James, who joined the school in 1975 as a deputy, described as:

A very considerable tension in the school between the black pupils and quite a number of the staff...I remember feeling there's quite a lot of simmering tension here, antagonism, and dislike...which manifested itself mainly in terms of the older black kids being very highly in evidence in all the disciplinary activities of the school. It seemed to me to be almost constantly the black kids who were up in front of the deputies and the head and other senior teachers as well, digging their toes in against authority.

John Burgess, the new head, noted that at his interview there was a concern amongst the education officers and inspectors about the 'problem' of young black students and how he would cope with them.

Some teachers at the time apparently responded with demands to return to more autocratic forms of school discipline and more strictly enforced standards. Others, such as those mentioned above, and the new head, seeing the roots of student alienation and disruption in an irrelevant curriculum, outmoded pedagogy, and inappropriate teacher/student relationships, saw the solution more in terms of school reform, greater efficiency, curriculum development, more sensitive and flexible methods of handling students and more informal teacher/student relationships. All this gave added impetus to the consideration of Multicultural Education as a strategy for reform.

A further factor was the growth of a widespread concern nationally and locally about the attainment of students from Afro/Caribbean backgrounds which of course culminated in the establishment of the Rampton Committee of Enquiry in 1979. In 1971 Bernard Coard published his influential pamphlet 'How the West Indian Child is Made Educationally Sub-Normal in the British School System' (which was read by several of the Milltown High staff) in which he argued that the negative portrayal of black culture in the school curriculum and the negative attitudes of teachers to black culture combined to produce a poor self-concept and low self-expectations amongst many black children. A

series of research reports published in the first half of the 1970's documented the 'underachievement' of many Afro/Caribbean students (see Tomlinson 1983 for a review and Troyna 1984b for a critique). All this added fuel to growing national demands for Multicultural Education. Locally, a small, but vocal, number of Afro/Caribbean parents were beginning to express their concern about the poor progress of their own children in Milltown schools. This prompted Michael James to conduct his own internal survey of exam results and allocation of different ethnic groups to ability bands in 1977/78. Whilst he found that ethnic minority students were more likely than their white counterparts to stay on into the sixth form and there was 'some evidence to suggest that West Indian (sic) pupils achieve well, especially at C.S.E. level in Art, Metalwork and Modern Languages', there was 'in English, Mathematics and Science...a clear tendency for West Indian pupils to be placed in lower ability sets and to achieve poorer examination grades than White British pupils.' (from the appendix to the working party report). This concern with attainment, which derived from a genuine professional concern amongst the staff at Milltown High about the achievement of their students, provided another reason for the consideration of Multicultural Education. Multicultural education in this case came to be seen as a means to enhance the academic achievement of Afro/Caribbean youngsters by encouraging motivation and a positive self-concept through the study of their own cultural background.

It is also worth noting that whilst concern amongst certain members of the local Afro/Caribbean community over educational standards did not appear to threaten the 'credibility and stability' (Troyna and Williams 1986) of Milltown's school system to quite the same extent as in Inner London, what seems to have happened is that increasing numbers of local Afro/Caribbean parents, in search of a 'better quality' education for their children, decided to send them to more suburban secondary schools in Milltown. This became more possible in the second half of the 1970's as school rolls began to fall creating more empty places in suburban schools. Inner city schools, like Milltown High, were faced with a growing problem of attracting enough students to maintain their staffing levels and in some cases their very existence. Multicultural Education was clearly a way in which the school could attempt to reassure such parents that the needs of their children would be catered for.

Furthermore, a number of local representatives of the Afro/Caribbean community were in fact beginning in the mid-1970s to ask specific questions

about what the school was doing to reflect the backgrounds and cultures of its minority students. Requests from such groups to use the school premises for a local community cultural event called 'Roots' had been turned down and an atmosphere of suspicion developed between school and community groups. Michael James explained:

To be fair we'd been holding them at arms length and that hadn't satisfied me...particularly when they were asking perfectly relevant questions...about curriculum and syllabuses, and where was the reflection of the fact that there were black kids in the school, where was the cultural education, where was the support for kids of a different culture from the white British culture.

This pressure again provided an impetus for the consideration of Multicultural Education.

It is perhaps easy to see the development of Multicultural education as merely a response by the state and the state's representatives in schools to the problems of social order and control which were being presented by black youth (Carby 1982, Mullard 1984). Indeed, as Troyna (1984) points out, it is no coincidence that there has been increasing activity on the policy making front since the 1981 civil disturbances. At school level too Multicultural Education was seen as part of a solution to the problem of growing student disaffection, resistance and rebellion. But what I have tried to show here is that at Milltown High the emergence of Multicultural Education on the educational agenda was the result of a number of inter-related factors. The 'problem' of black alienation and the threat to school order was one factor. Others included the arrival in the school of a number of teachers, a new head and deputy head who believed in a liberal educational ideology and were committed to school reform, curriculum development and more progressive pedagogy. They were genuinely concerned about the attainment of their students and their consequent life chances and came to see Multicultural Education as a means to enhance their educational achievements by improving self-concepts and increasing motivation. A number were also concerned with the problem of racism and saw Multicultural Education as a way of educating all their students against racism. These teachers were clearly influenced by the wider debates and campaigns in the L.E.A. and nationally which were being waged at the time in

response to the issue of Afro/Caribbean 'underachievement', and were also coming under pressure from a number of local parents who were concerned about the attainments of their children and the lack of response in the school to the presence of Afro/Caribbean youngsters. It was these factors combined which placed the notion of Multicultural Education on the school agenda in 1977.

Multicultural Education 1977-1982

Michael James established Milltown High's working party on Multicultural education in January 1978 and it eventually submitted its report entitled 'Multi-Cultural Education in the 1980s' in May 1980. What did this group achieve and how did other members of staff respond to their work and ideas? It is, of course, difficult to establish the 'achievements' of such a group, first because of the problems in defining what can be taken as 'achievement'. It is worth emphasising here that Multicultural Education was not seen within the school as a specific innovation which was to be implemented at a given point in time, unlike say a move to mixed ability grouping (Ball 1981) or a planned change in style of teaching (Gross, Giaquinta and Bernstein 1971). It can best be characterised, as I explained in my introductory chapter, as a set of principles upon which school practice can be based. It is difficult therefore to assess retrospectively how or when progress towards it was achieved. A second difficulty was that I inevitably had to rely on the retrospective views of those who were members of the working party or who were teachers in the school at the time, and the evidence contained in the working party report itself. Retrospective views are inevitably clouded by the passage of time and therefore more open to certain forms of bias. The working party report was something of a public relations document, circulated to L.E.A. representatives and other schools, and therefore presented only a partial view of the school.

However, an examination of this data seems to indicate that certain changes occurred in the school during the 3 years that the working party met. These changes may, of course, have occurred anyway, without the existence of a working party. How much the group initiated change is difficult to tell, but for some of the teachers the working party clearly offered support and legitimated the changes they were attempting to make in their practice, and for others it facilitated or encouraged change.

The first thing that appears to have been achieved is the development of a definition of Multicultural Education which provided a rationale for school policy at the time. What were the central tenets of this definition? They hinge around the 3 key assumptions identified by Bullivant (1981):

- 1) Learning about their own cultural backgrounds will enhance the academic achievement of minority students.
- 2) This will therefore mean greater equality of opportunity.
- 3) If other students learn about the culture of ethnic minority groups then prejudice and discrimination will be reduced.

The working party proposed that,

Multi-cultural Education is a whole curriculum which also involves an attitude to life. It aims to promote a positive self image and respect for the attitudes and values of others. Such an education will improve academic attainment.

They agreed with statements from the Bullock Report(1975):

Attainment is related to language, but especially to cultural identity and cultural knowledge.

No child should be expected to live as though school and home represent two totally separate and different cultures which have to be kept apart. The curriculum should reflect the many elements of that child's life lived outside the school. Too many multi-racial schools ignore the fact that the community they serve has altered radically over the last 10 years or so.

The members of the working party therefore accepted wholeheartedly the first and second of Bullivants assumptions. Low attainment amongst ethnic minority students, they maintained, derived from poor self-image and a lack of cultural identity. The solution was to bring home culture and school culture more closely into line, thereby enhancing the cultural identity of the minority child and consequently his/her attainment. Implicit is the idea that such a move would increase equality of opportunity within the school and therefore the life chances of minority students. Such an approach has been termed 'Benevolent Multiculturalism' by Margaret Gibson (1976, quoted in Troyna and Williams 1986).

The working party also argued that the aim of Multicultural Education was to, 'actively foster good relations, on the basis of mutual respect for different cultures in Britain'. They concluded that they were not just

discussing education in a multicultural school, but also education for a multicultural society and that what was important was that the school should help students to 'understand and co-operate with their neighbours in our tiny island and the larger societies of the European Economic Community and the "world village"'. This was to be achieved by the permeation of the school curriculum with information about 'the wide variety of social and ethnic groups' that made up 'contemporary Britain' and the 'global village', and the fostering of values such as 'respect for others' and 'tolerance'. They thus accepted also the third of Bullivant's assumptions and advocating what Gibson calls the 'Cultural Understanding' approach.

Thus their definition of multicultural education derived from their key concerns - the disaffection, poor self-esteem, low self-expectations and consequent underachievement of black students, and the racist attitudes prevalent in British society. Multicultural Education, as they saw it, was a way of taking action on both.

How were these ideas received and operationalised by the staff in the school at the time? Did the definition of Multicultural Education offered by the working party reflect the practice of teachers at this time? Or did it prompt a review and change of existing practices? From the data I gathered it does not appear that the advocacy of Multicultural Education was seriously challenged ideologically, at least publically. Whilst there was some opposition from staff who adopted an 'assimilationist' perspective - 'why should we change, they have chosen to come to England anyway' - this was limited. Most opposition appears to have come from staff who regarded the activities of the working party with a certain amount of cynicism, because they had to take classes for working party members who were visiting other schools or believed the working party to be 'a bandwagon for careerist teachers' or felt multiculturalism had little relevance to their classroom work. There was certainly no attempt to move the debate away from the confines of multiculturalism towards the broader issue of racial inequality in education or in society. The agenda of multiculturalism and the appropriate school response to this 'fact' remained unchallenged.

The working party conducted its own research on the implementation of Multicultural Education. Members interviewed each head of department in the school about 'what their department was doing in recognition of the fact that the children they teach come to the school from a great variety of cultural

backgrounds'. What follows is a critical summary of their findings. Most of the department heads whose comments are recorded in the report appear to have accepted the basic premises of Multicultural Education as outlined above (although there are no comments from the Maths and Craft department included). There are several references to the aims of promoting 'respect', 'tolerance', 'sensitivity towards others' and 'understanding' of different cultural and ethnic groups, and a positive ethnic 'identity', self-image and pride in 'blackness'. Most point to the fact that their departments were approaching these issues through a reform of their curriculum content. The English department claimed to be buying 'a good deal of literature by and about people from the ethnic minorities', and had begun a course entitled 'Language, Accent, Dialect and Communication'. The Remedial department claimed to have 'destroyed several sets of unacceptable texts and...restructured its booklist'. The Geography department said that they had introduced the 'study of population movements, racial patterns in urban and rural areas, and Third World Studies', the History department themes such as 'the emergent nations of Africa and civil rights issues in the U.S.A. and South Africa', and the R.E. department a multi-faith curriculum. The Languages department had established Spanish as the first language because of 'its cultural significance in parts of the West Indies' and aimed to ensure that 'the cultural values and life styles of the Spaniards and the French are understood whilst the language is being taught'. The Science department had bought work cards that 'illustrate naturally the fact of the multi-cultural society' and hoped to demonstrate the scientific 'achievements' of different world societies. The Art department said that they encouraged students 'to reflect their view of the local environment' in their work and that inevitably some student work represented 'the black idea', and the Home Economics department said they encouraged the use of 'alternative recipes in order to include as many cultures as possible'.

Clearly most of the departments in the school had therefore considered the issue of Multicultural Education. However, for most this seemed to mean little more than a change in the content of their syllabuses or textbooks to reflect a more diverse range of 'cultures'. For some it merely involved reiterating their existing philosophy which was believed to be synonymous already with a Multicultural approach (e.g. the Languages and Music departments). Multicultural Education appeared to have no implications for pedagogy, teacher/student interaction, student grouping, school decision making, etc., the things which

make up what has been called the 'hidden curriculum' of the school, beyond a generalised commitment to 'tolerance' and 'respect' in relationships with students. The only non-curriculum areas which were reported on were the importance of 'the role of group tutor' in 'enhancing the pupil's understanding of themselves and others', and the introduction of various extra-curricular activities such as 'a steel band, Kung Fu, African dance and drama groups which have explored experiences of different culture groups'. Multicultural education was not therefore generally seen as a prescription for radical reform which involved changes in teaching methods or teacher/student relationships or school government or for that matter many other aspects of school life beyond curriculum content. In short, it involved minimal change in established school life and practices, and the adoption of what Troyna and Ball (1985b) call a 'cultural tourism' approach to Multicultural Education. Such an approach was fairly typical of most schools claiming to be involved with Multicultural Education at the time, and represented the philosophy then advocated by the L.E.A..

Having said that minimal change was involved, several of the staff I interviewed pointed to the positive achievements of the working party. They claimed that there had been a great improvement in school/community relations, in the respect shown by staff for the cultures and backgrounds of the children, and therefore in teacher/student relationships. 'Above all', said Michael James, 'we made people think, we put it on the agenda'.

The working party also presented a large number of recommendations (59 in all). These included proposals that teachers examine their own attitudes on race and teaching in a multi-ethnic school, increase their awareness of racism and the cultural backgrounds of their students, write multicultural aims into their syllabuses and review curriculum content, and pressure examination boards to adopt multicultural syllabuses. The group also proposed the improvement of school/community/parent links, the development of multi-faith assemblies, and the establishment of more extra-curricular activities 'to allow pupils to express their cultural interests', and called for greater support from the L.E.A.. Clearly they wished to move further than a mere 'cultural tourism' towards a consideration of the wider implications of their policy. But their recommendations were still mainly confined within the basic premises and assumptions of multiculturalism and its central concern with cultural backgrounds, identity and attitudes.

A Move to Anti-Racism?

In the year after Milltown High's working party submitted its report Milltown L.E.A. began to formulate its plans for the reorganisation of its secondary schools. In the time running up to the eventual reorganisation most heads and teachers were looking anxiously to the future, concerned about their positions in a contracting system. Moreover, the L.E.A. had published its own policy statement in 1980 which contained a commitment to cultural pluralism and emphasised the importance of Multicultural Education. This affirmed and legitimized the approach taken at Milltown High. There was, therefore, little incentive and few efforts to review the school's policy on Multicultural Education or assess its implementation during the period 1980-82.

In June 1982 Michael James became head teacher. He had the immensely complicated task of creating a new structure for the school and welding a diverse group of teachers into a working unit. Perhaps not surprisingly he decided to leave a review of school policy on Multicultural Education until the new staff had settled in. However, in October 1982 he, along with other headteachers, received a letter from the L.E.A. requesting that they produce an 'institutional policy on racism'. No deadline was given for the completion of this exercise, the headteacher was merely asked to 'initiate the necessary action' and the 'appropriate consultations'.

Michael James responded by asking his new staff early in 1983 if interested teachers would write down ideas they might have for the content of such a policy statement. Eight teachers did. On the basis of these ideas, and his own knowledge of the field, Michael James wrote a school policy statement, briefly discussed it with his senior staff and then took it to his newly formed governing body (4). They accepted the policy with little discussion and the statement was placed in the staff file. 'Consultation' was therefore limited. There was apparently little staff discussion about the policy or its implications for practice. Most staff seemed either indifferent or believed that the statement affirmed their present practice. The majority were uninvolved in the process of policy formulation. Non-teaching staff were likewise uninvolved, as were parents and governors, with the exception of the few who commented at the governors meeting when the document was approved.

Nor was there much discussion about how the policy should be implemented. Michael James, in fact, left the school at the end of 1983, and the question of implementation had to await the arrival of a new head, David Benyon, in April 1984. He modified the policy statement slightly with the help of two governors, but accepted the bulk of its content. In September 1984 he initiated a working party on Multicultural and Anti-Racist to make 'interim reports, including recommendations for action', by Easter 1985. The working party, however, met only 2 or 3 times before the teachers' industrial action forced it to abandon its activities. The question of implementation had remained relatively unexplored when I began my field work in September 1985.

But the school had formulated a policy on Anti-Racist Education. Troyna and Williams (1986) argue that the development of L.E.A. Anti-Racist policies has been the result of a number of factors. The growth of black and white Anti-Racist campaigns and pressure groups, the increasing number of black social scientists and professionals, the importance of the black vote in local politics, and the concern about educational opportunities and social order which followed the 1981 'riots', have been paramount. At the school level similar influences were felt although less directly. A number of local black community workers and professionals who had contacts with the school were beginning to express their concerns directly within a framework of racism and institutionalised racism, and more 'radical' teachers in the school and the L.E.A. were increasingly concerned about racism and involved, through organisations like N.A.M.E., in the Anti-Racist movement. The 1981 'riots' were seen by many as symptomatic of the racism and unequal opportunities faced by black youth. But the school policy on racism, although given added impetus by these factors especially through the knowledge and awareness of Michael James, seems largely to have been the product of the L.E.A.'s request that the school formulate a policy. Without such a request it is doubtful that the school would have made this a priority at the time. Few staff felt that it was an issue of burning importance, struggling as they were in the months following reorganisation to cope with a new and often difficult school environment. Moreover, 'race relations' within the school between black students and white staff and black and white students were apparently fairly harmonious. It is perhaps understandable that few teachers were interested in becoming involved in the process of policy formulation.

What of the policy itself? How did it differ from the school's previous commitment to Multicultural Education? There certainly appears to have been a shift in the goals of the policy. Whereas in the past the central concern was the 'promotion of a positive self-image' which would thereby enhance academic attainment, now 'racism' and its elimination had become far more central. The document quotes a statement made by Michael James in November 1981:

Some of us have been made painfully aware of the racism which pollutes the air we breath as surely as does the nicotine the dedicated smoker is forced to inhale. We need to realise its habituation within each one of us. We also need to appreciate that it will multiply through our inactivity.

The policy maintains that:

Racism is a human condition which, with immense political and economic power, is built into the institutions of British Society. Racism springs partly from ignorance, and is fed by the media. Whether personal or institutional, whether intentional or unintentional, the racism in Britain today has to be judged by the individual actions and group practices it produces and has to be countered urgently. Education has a vital role to play in this.

Moreover, it is argued that:

Much British education perpetuates racism and can even be accused of preparing pupils to accept future racism by its own practices (e.g. reliance on culture biased test materials, streaming, etc.). Schools must understand the nature and effects of racism, must examine their institutional practices and must confront, and equip themselves to overcome the racism of all who are associated with the institution.

The policy goes on to provide a number of general prescriptions for action to 'counter racism' and promote a 'dynamic multicultural education'. These include commitments that the school should:

- 1) consult parents, research workers and community groups...(to)...develop a comprehensive training programme to combat racism.
- 2) be aware of sex, class and race issues in the pupils' communities.
- 3) teach what racism, prejudice and discrimination are. The whole curriculum should reflect the school's multicultural and anti-racist policy.
- 4) promote strategies for combatting racism and evaluate the effectiveness of those strategies.
- 5) keep all aspects of the curriculum, both overt and hidden, under regular review, and make modifications when necessary.

In addition it makes a number of more specific prescriptions including staff racism awareness training, studies of attempts to change racist attitudes in other schools, the purchase of multicultural and anti-racist resources, an examination of the schools grouping and disciplinary procedures for imbalance, positive images in wall displays, the creation of a course to counter racist presentation in the media, and the serious treatment of racist abuse or assault, and a number of others.

However, the policy, in some respects, remains a rather vague and ill-defined statement. Many of its proposals are general rather than specific and their implications for practice in the school are unclear. The policy contains no definition of racism or of concepts such as 'institutional' and 'unintentional' racism and little specification of the forms racism might take in education. It is not therefore clear exactly what, in education or society, the school aims to eliminate or counter.

Whilst it is argued that education 'perpetuates' and legitimates racism, the statement gives only brief mention of the practices and procedures that are, or might be, involved. The way in which they are, or might be, racist is not clarified. Further, the policy does not explain how teachers might identify and combat such practices. For example, in the item on student grouping, the policy does not tell teachers what might constitute an 'imbalance' in 'setting, banding and disciplinary procedures', or what teachers should do if they find one. Teachers are also asked to 'make modifications' to the 'overt and hidden curriculum' 'when necessary', but no guidance is given on when this might be necessary or what modifications might be appropriate.

The policy is also unclear about the form education for non-racism should take in the school. A commitment is made to 'develop a comprehensive programme

to combat racism' and to teach 'what racism, prejudice and discrimination are', but the policy does not specify in what area of the school curriculum this teaching should occur, what methods could be used or what difficulties might be anticipated and how they might be overcome. It is not made clear how the 'whole curriculum' should 'reflect the school's multicultural and anti-racist policy'. Again, although the policy hints at a community education aspect, it does not specify how teachers should become 'aware of sex, class and race issues in the pupils' communities' or what they might do when they have become aware.

Finally, the policy says very little about implementation. It contains no timetable for or programme to assess implementation. In fact few clear demands are made of any specified individual in terms of policy implementation. All this, as we shall see, resulted in a rather ad hoc approach to Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education in the school.

Thus the school had made a significant move in developing a policy on Anti-Racist Education. But the resulting statement was, like the L.E.A. statements, rather vague and offered teachers little concrete guidance on how to operationalise the principles of Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism in the school. One might speculate that this lack of specificity was one reason why the policy statement was accepted by staff without controversy.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have tried to look back and reconstruct the way in which teachers at Milltown High have in the past approached the issues of Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism, and how they have responded in policy terms to the fact that there were ethnic minority students in the school and they were preparing all their students for life in a multicultural society. Their school policy appears to have travelled a similar road to L.E.A. policy, moving from Assimilationism, to a consideration of Multicultural Education, towards a notion of Anti-Racism. The consideration of Multiculturalism was impelled by similar factors to those influential at L.E.A. and national level - the arrival in the school of a number of 'policy entrepreneurs' committed to change, the threat to social order presented by black youth, the concern with the attainment of Afro/Caribbean students and the pressure of a vocal minority of parents and community representatives. School policy was also influenced by the fact that the L.E.A. was developing policy. The head and deputy had fairly close links with various L.E.A. officers. However, it would be wrong to see this as a one way process. In fact 'pioneering' schools like Milltown High, which had put these issues on the agenda, also influenced the L.E.A. to move in the same direction. In this sense L.E.A. policy did not initiate change, but merely legitimated changes which were occurring at the school level.

Teachers' responses to the school's commitment to Multicultural education in the late 1970s and early 1980s appeared mainly to be centred around reform of the formal curriculum. The content of courses were changed in order to reflect more fully the backgrounds and cultures of the students who attended the school. This, it was hoped, would increase the motivation, self-esteem and therefore achievement of ethnic minority youngsters and reduce prejudice and hostility amongst others.

Following the L.E.A. secondary reorganisation the school began a move towards a stronger commitment to Anti-Racism. I have noted, however, that this appears to have been motivated more by the need to comply with L.E.A. requests for a policy statement rather than a full and clear debate of the issue. This is in part because of the disruption caused by the reorganisation and the lengthy teachers' industrial action, but it is also the result of a confusion over the whole concept of 'Anti-Racism' and its implications for practice.

Discussion of this change in approach was restricted to a small number of teachers, despite a request from the L.E.A. that the school involve a wider group. The school policy itself emphatically states a commitment to work towards the eradication of racism, but in several respects it is a vague and ill-defined statement which does not specify clearly the implications of Anti-Racism for school practice.

Footnotes

- 1) This subsequently resulted in a new multi-faith R.E. syllabus which was circulated to all schools and parents early in 1986.
- 2) Although the activities of this group were severely restricted by the teachers' industrial action which began shortly after it was established.
- 3) Whilst most of these individuals have subsequently left the school, others have taken their places. One key person, Jennifer Green, the Head of English, was still there in 1985/6.
- 4) Prior to secondary school reorganisation in 1982 the City Council Education Committee acted as secondary school governors in Milltown.

Chapter Four

The Headteacher, the School,
and Multicultural and Anti-
Racist Education.

Introduction

It has been traditionally thought that head teachers in England enjoy considerable power and authority to determine the organisation and ethos of their schools. The head has been described as the most 'powerful reality definer' (Sharp and Green 1975) in the school, and as occupying the 'dominant position' (Bacon 1978) thus able to 'mould the institution in accordance with his own views' (Coulson 1976). Hoyle (1986) argues that the head teacher has 'a high degree of authority' and is also in a position to exercise considerable 'influence' in the school. Both are based upon his/her structural position as legally responsible for the internal activities of the school, which is backed by the, rarely used but nonetheless present, legal sanction of being able to initiate dismissal proceedings against teachers. They are also based on the head's personality or charisma, expertise in terms of educational and organisational matters, ability to set and enforce normative controls, key position in terms of control over resources, access to promotion, information or important tasks, and contact with key individuals outside school.

As a result many people have considerable expectations of head teachers. Burgess (1984a) notes that H.M.I. have suggested on several occasions that the quality of the head teacher is fundamental to the effectiveness of the school. Several writers have drawn attention to the importance of heads in initiating and encouraging educational innovation (see for example Hoyle 1968, Taylor 1969, Brennan 1981). More recently Troyna and Ball (1983) have argued that the attitude and approach of the head is crucial in the translation of L.E.A. policies on Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education into practice at the chalk face.

However, the power, authority and influence of head teachers is in practice limited, and their freedom constrained. They cannot 'do what they bloody like' (head quoted in Burgess 1984a). Heads are not autonomous. They act under legal and financial constraints and are accountable to Boards of Governors, L.E.A.s and, increasingly, as market forces are brought into the field of education, to parents. They are also subject to constraints from within their schools. Secondary schools are now increasingly large and differentiated and heads have an important integrating role which often means that radical change that could alienate and fragment staff is a risky business. Hoyle (1986) points to the

'loosely-coupled structure of the school' which means that groups of staff, for example in subject departments, may have specific kinds of professional expertise in pedagogy or curriculum matters about which the head may have limited knowledge, which enables them to enjoy considerable autonomy. In most schools there is a strong norm of non-interference in the 'professional' teacher's classroom activities which is reinforced by the fact that most teaching goes on behind closed doors. As a result there is often a subtle process of negotiation, bargaining, and mutual adjustment between a head and his/her staff.

This chapter addresses two central and inter-related questions. A new head, David Benyon, had been appointed to Milltown High a year before my field work began. I was interested in the extent to which he could mould a school in accordance with his ideals. Given the fact that the head is 'a critical reality definer', but with powers that are clearly limited, to what extent could he redefine a school with already established structures and practices? As Colin Lacey (1977) said, new teachers enter an 'arena for competing pressures. On the one hand there is the need to become effective and accepted within the school, on the other the desire to make the school more like the place in which the teacher would like to teach.' Similar pressures confront the new head teacher. He/she is torn between a need to conform to established systems and procedures in order to be accepted, and a desire to create an organisation more congruent with his educational beliefs. Lacey suggested that new teachers adjust to their positions in three main ways. One is 'strategic compliance', in which, whilst retaining private reservations, the teacher accepts established practices. A second way is 'internalised adjustment' where the teacher comes to believe that established practices are actually for the best. A third Lacey termed 'strategic redefinition of the situation'. This is not really a form of adjustment because here the teacher succeeds in causing established actors to change their interpretations and practices. My first question in this chapter is concerned with the extent to which a new head can 'redefine' a school, and the extent to which he must 'adjust' to his new situation.

My second question is concerned with how David Benyon's conception of the school and his attempt to redefine the school related to his commitment to Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education? If we take the view that Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education is not just about a minor tinkering with the curriculum, but is part of the whole ethos and organisation of the school, then

David Benyon's attempt to reform the school must be seen as intimately related to this issue.

The chapter is, therefore, divided into two main parts. The first looks at David Benyon's educational philosophy, the changes he tried to implement, and the constraints which he faced. The second part links this with the issue of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education, looking at how he interpreted this and attempted to put L.E.A. and school policy into practice. Much of the data used was gathered in several relatively unstructured interviews with David Benyon conducted in his office or at his home. I also make use of extracts from school documents that he wrote, data from my observation of his practice around the school, and the comments of certain key informants who were also close observers of his practice.

The Headteacher's Perspective on the School

David Benyon was appointed as headteacher at Milltown High in April 1984. He was rather ambivalent about the idea of becoming a head, but having decided to become one he thought he would like to work in an inner city area where, in his words, 'in so far as education can have an effect on people's futures and where good schools are most needed...that's where I thought I should be.' He was born in 1944 into a socialist-orientated, middle class family and grew up in an atmosphere which he described as 'generally radical, anti-establishment and committed to change', and which influenced him early in life to become involved in social and political issues. He became committed to egalitarian ideals and these framed his educational thinking and his views on how schools ought to be organised and run. He disliked the emphasis on elitism, formal teacher-pupil relationships and the corporal punishment at the grammar school he attended. He studied Physics at University and then trained as a teacher. His teacher training he found rather 'uninspiring', and very much dominated by a grammar school tradition which he rejected.

In 1966 he took his first teaching post at a new, purpose built comprehensive school committed to the development of new ideas, innovation, and the sort of egalitarian principles to which he subscribed. He admired the head who, he felt, was open to change, encouraged young staff, was interested in curriculum development and mixed ability teaching, and who emphasised the importance of pastoral care and community use of the school. He then became Head of Physics and later Integrated Studies/ First Year in a comprehensive school in the south of England. Here he was able to introduce changes in curriculum and pedagogy, and develop his commitments to what he called a 'progressive, child centred approach to learning' with an emphasis on 'breaking down subject barriers', 'independent learning, resource based learning, enquiry methods and more discussion'. In 1979 he left to become deputy head at a community comprehensive school. He enjoyed the ethos and philosophy of this school which emphasised 'progressive ideas, community links, informal relationships with students, first names, no uniform, more resource base learning', and above all 'a culture of change and innovation'. It was these sorts of experiences that influenced David Benyon's educational philosophy.

What was this philosophy and how did it relate to the type of school he wanted Milltown High to become?

Stephen Ball (1981), drawing on Marsden (1971) and Hoare (1965), has identified three basic models of the comprehensive school. First, the meritocratic model which is based on the principles of equality of opportunity, but with an emphasis on the maximisation of student academic success. Comprehensive schools based upon this model have been streamed or banded and have had examination success as their major priority. As Andy Hargreaves (1986) notes, they have generally based their curriculum and organisation on 'the academic tradition' deriving largely from the public and grammar schools. A second model is the integrative which has emphasised the education of students from different social backgrounds in the same school as a means of breaking down social class barriers and encouraging tolerance, social awareness and a more integrated society. This model does not seem to have specific organisational implications, but is used at an ideological level to justify comprehensive reforms. Third is the egalitarian model which is founded upon the notion of social justice and equal worth of individuals, and emphasises more equal teacher/student relationships, mixed ability grouping, personal and social rather than academic educational aims, curriculum development and greater community involvement. Ball quotes Countesthorpe College as one example of a school based upon these principles. As Ball notes, 'Most comprehensive schools would undoubtedly demonstrate a mixture of these philosophies, if only at the ideological level', and this was undoubtedly true at Milltown High. Here I want to examine which of these principles were dominant in David Benyon's views.

During the interviews I had with David Benyon he expressed a belief in 'progressive educational methods' and view that schools should provide 'equal chances for all'. He argued strongly for more equal relationships between adults and young people. In one interview he said:

One of the things I feel very strongly about is that in British society....adults on the whole treat children as if they're not full human beings, as if they're not capable of making up their own minds or making decisions, as if they don't have the full range of feelings that adults do...I think on the whole the way adults treat children leaves a lot to be desired. Young people are capable of far more than we give them credit for

and its just much more pleasant if you treat children as being grown up, and they respond by being grown up.

He was in favour in principle of students being involved as observers at staff meetings, and had encouraged several 5th year students at Milltown High to become members of school working parties. Indeed, it is perhaps significant that he always referred to the children in the school as 'students', a more adult and equal status being implied. He was also against addressing students by their surnames, a practice that he described as 'in itself unpleasant, but there is an overtone of contempt, an idea of them and us which I don't like'. He was also passionately opposed to the idea of corporal punishment. In fact, he was opposed, he said, to 'anything which gets in the way of normal relationships'. What he wanted at Milltown High was 'a more relationships-based school'. He hoped that staff would adopt a strategy of 'talking things through and discussion' in response to disciplinary problems rather than use formal punishments like detentions and lines, and spoke admiringly of staff who put such a strategy into practice. This was the approach he liked to use himself emphasising that in his own relationships with students he was always willing to listen, to talk and accept that they had valid views and perspectives on a situation.

Whilst David Benyon conceded that in society as it was organised at present exam results were important and that the school would be doing its students a disservice if it did not give them the opportunity to achieve their academic potential, he stressed the importance of personal and social development because, 'if you go hell for leather for academic success then there are all kinds of people, kids and staff, who are left by the wayside feeling pretty miserable'. In response to a question about his definition of a good school he replied:

Schools are about developing people, giving them opportunities they would not otherwise have had, enabling them to learn things they otherwise would not have learned....specifically, I suppose exam results, because that's what's necessary in order to get on....but it's about all sorts of other things....skills, attitudes as well, and I think these kind of things are learnt or passed on in all kinds of ways and not just in the classroom,

but within the classroom it is important that learning is organised so it is learning rather than teaching.

This notion of 'learning rather than teaching' was central to David Benyon's idea of good educational practice, and was implicit in several of the reforms he encouraged and the teaching styles he sponsored. It was an idea which was central to his conception of education as being 'something wider than just teaching French or Physics'. Thus:

The model of the teacher that I have always been interested in is of somebody who is helping children to explore and to learn and who is not just a source of information. So I'm interested in all the skills associated with that - questioning, listening, stimulating, suggesting rather than telling....They are all to do with sensitivity and listening and encouraging students to explore for themselves.

In a document for staff outlining his ideas for the development of the school he said:

The Secondary School has been dominated by knowledge to be imparted to students. The natural corollary of this is a heavily didactic teaching style, dominated by teacher discourse (sometimes disguised by worksheets). But a curriculum organised around the general aims (of the school), and the skills mentioned (in another part of the document), would stress learning, and the provision of resources for learning much more than teaching. A stress on resources, with a variety of activities happening simultaneously, removes the need to try and group students by ability. The learning of skills implies a radically different classroom environment. Individuals and small groups will be much more active; discussion and debate and all kinds of activities and events, many out of school, will become much more important.

David Benyon's ideas on pedagogy combined with his interest in multi-disciplinary work led him to view the traditional 'academic' curriculum based upon subjects as artificial and irrelevant to life in the modern world. He referred to the 'straight forward academic curriculum in the 4th and 5th year

with 9 subjects and that's it' as 'sterile, not very exciting and with very little scope for the students to show any real initiative', and to the 'artificiality' of subject boundaries. In one interview he said:

A lot of the most worthwhile things that are worth knowing or finding out about don't fit into neat categoriesThere is an insularity between different subjects where people get out of touch and get bound up with a syllabus which is increasingly remote....There is a gap between what you need to know for real life and what you do in school and I think subject divisions emphasise that, emphasise the traditional virtues of 'we do it this way because we always have'.

He felt that breaking down traditional subject divisions gave a greater scope for the changes in pedagogy that he wanted to encourage.

He was also opposed to the allocation of students to groups on the basis of ability i.e. streaming, banding or setting. He emphasised his concern about the labelling and demotivation which occurred and also the fact that the process meant allocating students to groups which were then treated differently:

I have a very strong belief that mixed ability pragmatically didn't actually affect things and in terms of what the alternatives did to students....the alternative was just so appalling in terms of demotivation and telling people that they're C's and D's, and the fact is that what ever you say about 'Well they can always swap later', on the whole there are no changes later...Once you're in the A group you usually get a more privileged treatment than if you were in the C group....I just feel passionately that it's so unfair.

David Benyon also believed that education could be a force for social change. He thought that by helping to produce socially and politically aware and skilled people education could be a radicalising force, thus helping to create a more just society. He maintained that, 'education....can perform a mildly and beneficially subversive role', and:

Say if the 5th year A.C.S. group go off to the Urban Studies Centre and meet two or three people from S.W.A.P.O. and talk about Namibia and so on. They're talking about Southern Africa, but they're also hopefully taking away some ideas about social change and how it happens. You know what does that teach us about living in Chesham or Richmond Hill, about whether there is anything we can do, metaphorically, to take up arms against the situation we find ourselves in. I don't mean literally in terms of petrol bombs, but just that change is possible.

David Benyon was also committed to the idea of community education. He felt that the school should not only be available for use by the local community, but that also the school curriculum should reflect community concerns and interests, that education should provide students with the skills to be able to participate in community life, and that people in the community should be consulted about the development of the school.

To summarise, David Benyon espoused a progressive educational philosophy, a concern for personal and social development rather than just the academic, an ideal of more equitable teacher-student relationships, a pedagogy in which students could exert a greater control over their own learning, are more able to pursue their own interests and where the teacher plays a less didactic role, a more integrated curriculum less dominated by traditional academic subjects, a commitment to mixed ability grouping, community education and an ideal of education as a force for social change. I think it would be fair to place his philosophy fairly and squarely in the 'egalitarian' mode outlined by Ball. Indeed, it is interesting that on several occasions he referred to Countesthorpe College as a model.

Before moving on to look at the way David Benyon attempted to put these principles into practice at Milltown High I want to briefly examine how he saw his own role as head teacher. How did he interpret and define headship?

Milltown High was David Benyon's first post as a head and so he explained that he had spent a considerable amount of time 'finding his feet' and that his views on how to do the job were still in their formative stage. So his conception of headship, in contrast to the views he held on pedagogy and curriculum, was rather uncertain, and much of his practice, he felt, had been intuitive rather than clearly thought out. He did point to the multiplicity of tasks which a head teacher was expected to perform and towards the end of my

field work he drew up his own job description containing a long list of the duties he thought a head ought to perform. He stressed the importance of consultation with his staff, arguing that it was important to involve teachers as much as possible in the running of the school, in the decisions that were made and the changes that were being introduced, and he did attempt to have as many meetings as possible despite the union ban on meetings out of school hours. The ideal of head playing an equal role with staff in a democratic system of participatory management along the lines described by John Watts at Countesthorpe (Watts 1976) he found very attractive. Whilst he felt that such a model was not completely applicable to Milltown High he still liked to think of himself as 'first among equals'. He stressed in several meetings that the staff were a team and that this included himself, and they shared a collective responsibility for the smooth running of the school. He emphasised discussion, negotiation and reaching decisions through consensus. Such a conception of headship meant that he spent a lot of his time interacting with staff individually and in meetings, talking, discussing, and listening. His preferred style was egalitarian and informal and he displayed no overt symbols of high status, preferring to dress casually as an ordinary member of staff. He saw a major part of his job as the 'professional development' of his staff and so played a major role in INSET and setting up new schemes and curriculum developments. With students he did not adopt an autocratic disciplinarian role (although on occasions he was forced to), but preferred instead to stress the importance of building relationships and 'talking things through'.

This then was the type of head that David Benyon wanted to be. How did he see his task at Milltown High? A short time after his arrival he concluded that:

Milltown High was to varying degrees in a mess and that included lack of structures, decayed structures, bitter members of staff, divided staff, demoralised teaching profession reflecting the national picture, a school where to say the least there was not a consensus for change.

He formed the impression that many of the normal routines of the school were ill-defined and inefficient, but more importantly that the school lacked a coherent philosophy and worked on an ad hoc basis. As he said:

They were either just responding to crises or saying 'Oh, it's the end of term what are we going to do next term?' sort of thing. There wasn't an awareness amongst the senior staff about the need for long term planning.

Moreover, he came to a school which had falling rolls, was unpopular in the local area, and where many staff found it very difficult to cope with daily classroom situations. He observed that:

A lot of what goes on in the classroom is pretty uninspiring and traditional. Pretty much based on the traditional model of teacher knows and kids shut up and listen. A lot of teachers have not got beyond a 'how would I cope with mixed ability or a variety of different things going on in the classroom'. They will provide work for the slowest, but then every one has to do it....I don't think the bright students are being stretched and I don't think the less able are being catered for very well either. I think a lot of students probably experience what they get as fairly boring and not very exciting.

And although he had not taught in an inner city school before and was reassured by some that Milltown High was more peaceful than similar schools, he experienced it as 'much more chaotic than any other school I have been in'. There was more vandalism and bullying than he had been used to, and attendance and punctuality amongst the students was much worse.

David Benyon saw his task in two main ways. First, he wanted to turn a school, which he described as 'run down and depressed' into a popular, thriving, neighbourhood school which served its community well, and where parents would want to send their children. Second, he argued, areas like Chesham and Richmond Hill deserved good schools and it was his job to ensure that Milltown High was a good school. I have described the type of organisation and teaching practices he thought would characterise a good school. I now want to examine how he went about trying to create such a school.

Changing the school

Unlike the head that Burgess describes in his study of Bishop McGregor School (Burgess 1983) David Benyon was not in the enviable position of creating his own school, of planning an institution from scratch. He initially had to accept the established organisation of the school with all its routine practices and procedures, and the school staff, many of whom were selected on different criteria from the ones he would have used, and had been appointed to positions with job descriptions that he would have framed differently. This is in fact the position that most new heads face. They have to work with the school as it is when they arrive. Given this, how did David Benyon go about changing the school in the direction that he wanted? What changes did he try to introduce, what strategies did he adopt, and what constraints did he experience? First, perhaps a note of caution is in order. It would be a mistake to view David Benyon as a head who spent all his time single-mindedly scheming to change the whole school. In fact, as he pointed out, much of his time as head was spent dealing with routine matters and responding to situations as they arose. He did, however, see himself as a reforming head teacher and he had something of a mandate from the L.E.A. to change the school. The changes that he sponsored were very important to the structure and organisation of the school.

When he arrived in the school he had decided to follow the advice of others and not to try to change things over night, but to spend a year or so observing the way that the school worked, getting to know staff, and formulating his ideas. However, one aspect of school organisation struck him straight away. This was the banding system. Students from year 1, although allocated to mixed ability tutorial groups were actually taught in upper, middle, and lower bands. This was a form of grouping to which he was fundamentally opposed and so in the summer term of 1984 he proposed that the system was abandoned in favour of mixed ability grouping. This proposal seemed to have met with the support of many of the more 'progressively' minded teachers, mainly concentrated in the English department. Apparently very little opposition was voiced, perhaps because departments like Maths and Modern Languages were allowed through the system of blocked timetabling to continue to 'set' students into their own ability groups, the Humanities and Science

departments were allowed to continue a joint system of banding in years 4 and 5, and the Craft and Art subjects operated on the basis of smaller mixed ability groups anyway (c.f. Ball 1981) This reform, then, was implemented in September 1984. It was a change in the organisational structure of mainly the first three years of the school, but only had real implications for change in three departments - English, Humanites and Science.

A second major change sponsored by David Benyon was the introduction of a scheme which was called the Integrated Curriculum (I.C.). This was introduced in two stages. First in September 1985 the new first year intake were taught by one teacher for their main subjects - English, Maths, Humanities, Drama and Social Education. Science, Art, Crafts and P.E. continued to be taught by specialist subject teachers. In September 1986 this scheme was extended to the second year of the school. David Benyon explained his rationale for this change in a document that he circulated to staff in early 1985. In it he said:

Teaching continuity and tutorial oversight implies fewer staff teaching each group, and at least one teacher taking each group for a good deal more time than at present. This can be justified in terms of pastoral care. It can also be justified in terms of curriculum. The traditional secondary curriculum is unnecessarily fragmented. Knowledge is split up under subject labels, and it can be very difficult for children to see the connections in what they are taught. It is also hard to develop cross-curriculum policies, e.g. on writing and study skills, learning strategies, or equal opportunities.

This argument implies that the 'good deal more time' would involve at least a measure of interdisciplinary teaching or integrated studies.

Again this idea found its supporters among the 'progressive' elements on the staff and in its first stage amongst a wider group of staff who felt that given the very difficult behaviour of previous intakes some thing had to be done to cut down on the freedom of movement of younger children around the school which allowed them to mix with, and come under the influence of, older more deviant students. As at Beachside Comprehensive studied by Ball (1981), this innovation was accepted by many staff because they felt it would lessen the threat of disorder in classrooms and around the school. It was welcomed for pragmatic rather than ideological reasons. A team of 3 (there were only 3

classes in the first year intake in 1985) teachers agreed to begin the I.C. in September 1985. Although one of those teachers left late in the summer term before the scheme was due to start, David Benyon was able to secure a replacement and the scheme went ahead as planned. The I.C. team of teachers, after a term in temporary classrooms, moved into a newly furnished suite of rooms adjacent to the library in the middle of the 1985/6 academic year thus creating a first year 'home base' which David Benyon believed would provide stability and an opportunity to develop the type of curriculum and pedagogy that he preferred.

In the summer term of 1986 David Benyon and the senior staff decided to extend the scheme to the second year of the school. This, however, was a more contentious move. First, because the decision itself was taken without involving certain key heads of department - English, Maths and Humanities - although David Benyon maintained that he was aware of their views before the decision was taken. As I have explained heads of department were not included in the formal decision-making machinery of the school, nor did they have formal representation on the senior staff team. To some extent this made contentious decisions like this easier to take as potential opposition was excluded from the decision-making arena. These heads of department felt increasingly concerned that their subject specialisms and the expertise of subject teachers were being submerged in a rather ill-defined curriculum experiment. They were also less than keen to see their control over significant areas of school life weakened. However, David Benyon was keen to go ahead as the redesignation of the three school Section 11 staff as extra to the school's establishment meant that he could appoint three new teachers in September 1986. He felt that this was a good opportunity to appoint teachers of the type he wanted to the I.C. team rather than to existing subject areas. So, despite muted opposition, in September 1986 the I.C. department expanded to become the biggest department in the school with a staff of seven teachers. Whether this team of teachers actually developed the types of pedagogy and curriculum that David Benyon wanted to see is open to debate, but the basic structure of the school had been modified to facilitate it.

Another similar curriculum change was sponsored by David Benyon and planned by a group of teachers during my field work. This involved the increased co-ordination of curriculum content for third year classes in some of the main subject areas. Third year teachers from a number of subjects met

together and planned course materials along common themes. This, it was thought, would be another way of breaking down the 'artificiality' of subject boundaries.

A further change was made necessary by the introduction of I.C. As we have seen, David Benyon was opposed in principle to the separation of pastoral and academic systems. He wanted as far as possible to fuse the two roles so that groups of teachers would have academic and tutorial oversight for small groups of students on the 'mini school' model. However, when he arrived at Milltown High there was an established system based upon subject departments and houses (c.f. Burgess 1983). In the summer term of 1985 he proposed the abolition of the house system and its replacement by a horizontal year system for pastoral care. This married well with the idea of I.C. and the 'home base' for first and second year students. Again, despite rumblings of discontent from some staff, most notably the P.E. teachers who complained about the end of inter-house competitions, this reform was largely accepted and the new system with three heads of school/year in charge of year 5, years 3 and 4, and years 1 and 2 came into operation in September 1985.

David Benyon was also concerned that, in his words, 'the traditional academic curriculum is not meeting the needs of large numbers of children' and so when in the Autumn term of 1985 he was asked by the local inspectorate whether the school wished to make a bid for funding under the L.E.A.'s Alternative Curriculum Strategies (A.C.S.) scheme, the L.E.A.'s response to the Government's 'Lower Attaining Pupils Programme' (see D.E.S. 1986), he made a positive response. After discussing the issue with senior staff he decided that the school would make a bid and Susan Parker was delegated the task of drawing up specific plans and proposals. However, David Benyon was concerned that A.C.S. schemes which had been set up in other schools in the city were divisive, merely representing 'sink groups or ROSLA groups' under a new name, and were primarily a means of selecting out groups of troublesome or less able students. This went very much against his commitment to reducing selection and providing equal opportunities, and so he insisted on redefining or re-emphasising the aims of A.C.S.. In a document circulated to staff he explained:

The recent alternative curriculum developments have arisen from the recognition that the traditional academic curriculum is not meeting the needs of large numbers of children. New, more active learning methods and

a new more relevant curriculum are being developed. It is important that the new developments inform the main curriculum. A group of students should not be identified and separated from the rest of their year group. The new methods and curriculum are likely to be relevant for all students. The development of modular courses and credits would mean that all students would be able to participate in 'alternative' provision to some extent. Similarly, non-academic students should be able to participate in aspects of the main curriculum.

During discussions with Susan Parker over the exact nature of the school's bid for funding David Benyon modified his view a little. Susan Parker initially proposed that the school identify a target group of 'disaffected and underachieving' students in years 4 and 5. This was not what David Benyon had envisaged and so he asked Susan Parker to redraft her plan. She developed the idea of having a day of 'activities' that would not normally be offered in the school curriculum for the 4th year and identifying a target group of students who would be offered a more flexible and 'alternative' curriculum in the 5th year. This David Benyon was prepared to accept with the proviso that the 5th year group would be carefully selected and that the experiences that staff gained from planning and working with this group could form the basis for some future wider reform which would be made available to the full range of 5th year students. Eventually the school did submit a bid to the L.E.A. which was successful. A coordinator for the scheme was appointed from within the staff and the scheme was put on the school timetable in September 1986. A 5th year group of approximately 16 students were identified and worked with a tutor for varying parts of the week. The tutor planned with each individual student a curriculum that would, in theory, be designed to meet their individual requirements. So some students continued to spend the bulk of their time in mainstream curriculum courses, some doing several examination courses. Others spent more of their time working outside the school on community projects or at local colleges on 'link' courses. The 4th year students all spent one morning and one afternoon each week on A.C.S. Activities which include things like Assertiveness Training, Toy Making, Drama, Black Studies, Outdoor Pursuits and Word Processing. Many of these activities were 'unit accredited' which meant that after completing the course students were given certificates of credit showing what they had achieved and these could be compiled into a

'Record of Achievement' which could be used by the students when they left school.

Again there was little opposition amongst the staff to the idea or the form of A.C.S. apart from a bitter protest from the P.E. department when they realised that P.E. was to be taken out of the compulsory curriculum for 4th years to make time for A.C.S. activities thus reducing considerably their subject status, a decision which appeared to have been taken before consultation. Again the feeling amongst many staff was that the school had to consider new ways of working as so many of the older students were disaffected and switched off school. David Benyon perhaps encountered a more questioning attitude from one school governor who suggested at one governors' meeting that there was a danger with A.C.S. of providing 'thick lessons for thick kids'. However, this was a rather muted opposition as the governor in question broadly supported the idea.

A less specific, but potentially more wide ranging change that David Benyon tried to introduce was the development of Milltown High as what he called a 'Community Centred School'. Having worked in several schools which were organised on school/community centre lines it is perhaps not surprising that this was important to the way he wanted the school to develop. The L.E.A. was also keen to develop 'community schools'. The fact that the number of students attending Milltown High was falling rapidly and there was therefore considerable spare space and also potentially spare staff within the school were influential factors here. In late 1984 and early 1985 David Benyon wrote and circulated to staff, L.E.A. representatives, community workers and governors several short papers which outlined some of his ideas and raised questions for discussion. In these papers he conceded that there was little provision in the design of Milltown High for community use of buildings and that because the school in fact served several different 'communities' and there was already a rich network of community agencies and groups, that Milltown High was 'not the automatic focus of an organic community'. There was, therefore, limited opportunity to develop shared school/community use. However, he did put forward the following guidelines:

- a) 'Community' is defined for most purposes as the area served by our linked primary schools.
- b) Links with primary schools should be developed and strengthened.

- c) Whole school policies with community implications (e.g. Equal Opportunities, Racial Equality) should be developed and pursued vigorously.
- d) All those linked directly with the school, and the community, should be consulted on the development of Milltown High
- e) The school curriculum should be developed to include the broadest possible community dimensions.
- f) Shared use of Milltown High's facilities should be encouraged.
- g) Adults should be encouraged to use the building during the day, and take part in the life of the school.
- h) Community placement of Milltown High students should be expanded.
- i) Any school development should be examined for community implications.

He also proposed the setting up of an 'Advisory/Consultative Group' which could discuss the development of Milltown High as a community school.

However for a number of reasons, whilst progress towards some of the ideas that he put forward had been made, the development of the school along these lines appears to have been rather limited. Links with local primary schools had been strengthened and a teacher responsible for primary school liaison had been appointed, but a substantial number of parents with children at the local primary schools still opted to send their children out of the area to secondary school. Milltown High was not for them the natural choice of school. A limited use of the school's facilities existed with groups in the evening using the school gym and swimming pool and some use of spare classrooms by the local Community Education Centre. David Benyon did give a high priority to the development of whole school policies. Some aspects of the school curriculum did develop a community dimension, most notably the A.C.S. programme, but in other areas this remained very limited.

The idea of community consultation in the development of the school did not appear to have gone very far. Shortly after arriving at the school David Benyon, with the help of one of the Community teachers in the school, arranged a series of meetings with local youth and community workers. These meetings were initially arranged so that David Benyon could introduce himself to local workers and so that the people involved could begin to share ideas on the curriculum of the school and how they could offer each other mutual support and exchange skills. The meetings were held through out the academic year 1984/85 and discussions covered a wide range of issues, from school policies

concerning suspensions and contact with the police, to the notion of Milltown High as a community school, to the practical ways in which teachers and community workers could support each other. David Benyon had hoped that these meetings could form the basis of a more formal school/community consultative group which could debate issues concerning the development of the school. However, the meetings appear to have come to an end in the summer of 1985. There were conflicting explanations for this. The community teacher who organised them claimed that he stopped calling them because he felt that they were not achieving anything constructive. No concrete plans for action, he maintained, were emerging from the meetings. The community workers involved claimed that they stopped attending because they felt that there were certain issues that the school had to sort out before they could make further progress - things like the school's contact with the police, the attitude of staff to the idea of community education, and the effect of the teachers' industrial action on the school. So during my field work there was little discussion between school and local community workers and activists on developments and changes that were taking place within the school, apart from that is from the more formal discussions that took place at governors meetings. Here it should be pointed out that during 1987 the school governors did decide to co-opt a number of community representatives onto the governing body. Nevertheless, as David Benyon admitted talk about the development of Milltown High as a community school had 'laid fallow for a while'. At the time of writing he was hoping to renew discussions.

There were several reasons for the lack of progress towards his conception of a 'Community Centred School'. First, as I have already mentioned, the school was not seen as a natural choice by many local parents. Second, there was already a wealth of local provision in terms of community education in the area, and local community education workers were hostile to any moves which might have been seen to impinge on their 'territory', feeling anyway that schools were not organised in ways which were appropriate to giving power and control over educational provision to community groups. Third, although the L.E.A. supported the idea of 'community schools' it had no clear policy on what such schools might be like in practice. Finally, the fact that the school had throughout 1985 and 1986 suffered severe disruption because of the teachers' industrial action meant that school/community relations were often strained, and very few meetings could take place.

A final reform that David Benyon sponsored was the idea of school councils for the students (see chapter 2). From September 1985 he allowed school time for a teacher to meet with students regularly. Each tutorial group elected two representatives who attended meetings fairly regularly. Whilst it would be difficult to argue that these councils formed influential bodies in the school's decision making structure, they did succeed in providing some formal avenue for students to voice their opinions and experience political situations.

These then were the main changes that David Benyon introduced or encouraged during his first two years as headteacher. What strategies did he adopt to introduce them and to maximise their success? The time that he had spent as a head in Milltown was, to say the least, uncondusive to radical change, but nevertheless he had succeeded in introducing some quite major changes in the structure of the school, though, as he himself admitted, the extent to which these structural changes had led to real changes in pedagogy and the nature of teacher-student relationships was debatable.

In terms of structural change David Benyon succeeded in getting much of what he wanted simply because, like most heads, he remained the most central figure in the school decision-making process. As I have already explained, although he attempted to consult staff about changes, in often difficult circumstances because of the teacher industrial action, decisions were mainly taken by the senior staff or by himself after discussion with his deputies. Whilst there were some moves to democratise school politics - consultation meetings, greater involvement of staff in timetabling, an encouragement of staff to put forward their ideas and opinions formally and informally, and the introduction of school councils - David Benyon chose not to attempt a radical reform of the school political system along the lines of the participatory democratic model introduced at Countesthorpe College in which the head's decision-making power was transferred to the 'moot' (Watts 1977), although this was a system that attracted him. Given a diverse staff who had come to the school for a variety of reasons and who included significant conservative elements, he felt that he would be unlikely to achieve the sort of changes that he desired, and L.E.A. officials expected, in a more fully democratic decision-making system. David Benyon recognised the dilemma that he faced:

I try to be consultative, and I recognise that as a real problem....On the police issue, for example, my own view would be to say, 'no we'll have nothing to do with the police'. But I want to involve other people in deciding that....There's also the problem of how you effect change in a school....if you set up democratic procedures that involve everyone....The police issue might be a good example (see later in this chapter). If we had a vote on it in the staff room I expect there would be a vote to bring the police in as much as possible....Now if that is the case, what is my

role as someone who intellectually and theoretically wants to be as consultative as possible, which is the image I would like to aspire to, but in fact recognising that I think the school needs to change quite a lot. The staff who are here at the moment would probably not vote for the sorts of changes that I think are necessary....so there is a tension there between intellectually I'd like to be consultative and democratic, but practically I want, and I think the L.E.A. wants, certain changes that probably could not be arrived at in that way.

Thus in order to introduce the changes in school structure that he wanted David Benyon decided to hold back from any radical reform of the school's decision-making system and to preserve his own powerful position. He chose to abandon (temporarily at least) one reform to use his power to push through others which he regarded as fundamental. This is not to say that staff had no opportunity to influence decision-making. They clearly did both formally and informally (see chapter 2). In fact at Milltown High staff were generally consulted more fully than is the case in most schools that I am familiar with. But David Benyon remained the most central figure. Crucially he was the key initiator of change. He largely decided the direction of school reform and which particular changes were considered for adoption. Consultation with staff was generally about the form rather than the type of change, and so staff were able to influence the nature of implemented reform rather than which particular reforms were considered in the first place. In short, the agenda of reform was largely dictated by David Benyon. Most staff seemed to accept this as the head's prerogative. As one teacher said to me, 'it's his job to decide the way we're going and so he'll suggest what changes we talk about'.

David Benyon was also the key figure in staff appointments and appointing the staff he wanted was another way of achieving and reinforcing changes. Whilst he was not the only person involved he was the most influential figure as he played a key role in deciding upon the criteria that were used in selection and in drawing up job and 'person' descriptions. As he said, 'I know the sort of staff with the sort of attitudes on a whole range of things that I would like to be working here.' During my field work he was able to appoint 9 new teachers and been able to promote, internally, 3 existing teachers (I am not including here teachers who were given temporary promotions to cover for colleagues on courses or to work on special projects). However, for several of

these appointments his choice from those who applied was relatively limited (see chapter 9). Staff shortages in some subjects and the poor public image of the school restricted applicants, and sometimes, as the L.E.A. as a whole was overstaffed, he had to accept redeployed teachers from other schools. Furthermore, most of the vacancies that did occur were at a junior level. He had not appointed any new heads of major departments and had only appointed one new member of the senior management team.

When the opportunities did arise and where there was a reasonable spectrum of choice David Benyon was keen to appoint 'the sorts of people who are most likely to bring about the sorts of changes that we want'. This was the case when Susan Parker was appointed as deputy head, first temporarily for one year from September 1985 and then permanently from September 1986.

Her initial appointment, in fact, caused something of a storm because some staff felt she lacked experience and had been appointed over others who were more senior. At the time she was acting head of the English department, while the head of English was on maternity leave, but her permanent position was second in the English department. When the deputy head in charge of curriculum was given secondment for a year (1985/86) Susan Parker applied for the job together with one of the established senior teachers and two scale 4 heads of department. She was appointed because as David Benyon said, 'she had flare, initiative and was committed to the same sort of educational ideals and principles that I am'. After a year in the job the deputy head on secondment left for another post and Susan Parker applied for the permanent job. In the further particulars that David Benyon drafted for this job he outlined the sorts of developments that were taking place in the school and explained that what was required was a commitment to the 'developments outlined and the educational philosophy behind them'. In the job description he defined the main aspects of the job in terms of curriculum development in areas such as A.C.S., I.C., and cross-curricular links, the development of whole school policies in relation to race, gender and community links, staff development and timetabling. In the 'person specification', amongst a variety of personal qualities and experience, he was seeking someone who could act as a 'change agent/facilitator' and who was committed to 'a progressive educational philosophy' and to 'community involvement in the development of the school'. Susan Parker was appointed to the job.

It is difficult to estimate how influential David Benyon was in securing Susan Parker's appointment on these two occasions as I did not observe the appointments procedures. On the first occasion the appointments panel included two L.E.A. inspectors who agreed with David Benyon that Susan Parker was the best candidate. On the second local councillors and governors were involved and although David Benyon took part in the interviews, as he was not at the time a school governor, he was excluded from the decision-making process itself. This, together with the L.E.A. commitment to equal opportunities in job appointments which necessitated a rather lengthy and thorough selection procedure, precluded him simply securing the appointment of the person he wanted. Nevertheless he did set out the many of the criteria on which she was appointed and clearly made his views known. Susan Parker was the candidate that he preferred on both occasions.

Not only was this an appointment of someone who was in tune with his philosophy, but it was also in itself a means of signaling to staff the sorts of priorities that he had. As he said, 'appointing Susan Parker gives a very strong communication of what you want'. As well as appointing staff who were in tune with his philosophy David Benyon was in a position to encourage, or provide the opportunity for, staff who disagreed with his approach to leave. I do not wish to imply here that he made life so difficult for his political opponents that they had no alternative but to leave, but he did not stand in the way of staff who wished to move because they opposed the changes he was making. The deputy head replaced by Susan Parker was a case in point. She was a forceful character who disagreed quite fundamentally with some of David Benyon's priorities. After 18 years in the school she went on secondment and decided to take a deputy headship in another school rather than return.

Another strategy was using temporary scale points that became available as staff left or went on courses. During my time in the school several staff were offered temporary promotions like this in order to work on special projects. For example one teacher was asked to prepare a report on the feasibility of developing Personal and Social Education work with tutors and another was given responsibility for developing cross-curricular links in the 3rd year curriculum. Staffing was thus an important strategy for changing the school in the direction David Benyon preferred.

Whilst staff appointments were, in David Benyon's words, 'the most up front way of signaling what you want', he did use other methods of

communicating the sorts of changes he thought were necessary. One method was through the use of written papers and documents, another was through meetings and INSET. Although he was not a prolific writer of memos and organisational papers, David Benyon did write and circulate several papers and documents for discussion especially during the first year of his headship. A particularly significant document was one written in early 1985 entitled 'Development 1985 - 1990' in which he outlined the problems that faced the school, the aims that it ought to have and various ideas on curriculum, the nature of teaching and learning, assessment, pastoral care, community links, and the importance of whole school policies. I have used several quotations already from this document to illustrate his ideas. But written documents were not his favourite way of communicating his ideas. More often he used personal contact, discussion and example.

This necessitated having meetings and INSET sessions so that ideas could be discussed, problems aired and appropriate plans made. When he arrived in the school he instigated a number of working parties to review organisation and practices and he encouraged every member of staff to be on at least one of these groups. However, not long after they had been established the teachers began industrial action which effectively prevented them from meeting. When it became clear that the industrial action was going to continue for a long period of time David Benyon approached the L.E.A. for permission to have necessary meetings during school time when the school would be closed or students sent home early. Throughout my field work meetings were held in this way. Sometimes small groups of staff were allowed to meet together and their classes were either taken by a supply teacher or sent home, or sometimes the school opened late or finished early. David Benyon did not alienate staff during the industrial action, as some heads appear to have done, by seeming to undermine the action. He made clear his support for the teachers' unions (he was an active member of the N.U.T.) and he did not cover himself for absent colleagues or put pressure on teachers to do lunchtime duties or activities out of school time. He followed union guidelines and consulted regularly with school union representatives. In this way he probably achieved more in terms of change than would otherwise have been possible.

When groups of staff met together to discuss and plan curriculum developments David Benyon often played an important role. During the summer term of 1986 the teachers who were to form the I.C. team for the next academic

year met every Wednesday morning at the local teachers' centre. David Benyon led several of these sessions, explaining and discussing the type of curriculum that he hoped I.C. would become. This role in the 'professional development' of his colleagues he regarded as a central aspect of headship. Whole staff meetings and INSET sessions also gave him the opportunity to present his ideas on particular issues or changes and developments he hoped to see. It would be wrong to suggest that David Benyon totally dominated these meetings. Whilst he and the senior staff largely set the agendas many, especially the INSET sessions, provided the opportunity for staff to debate issues and communicate their views, and in some of the meetings David Benyon took the role of an 'ordinary' member of staff leaving the chair to others. This was part of his attempt to develop a 'consultative' style of management. Many of the teachers welcomed the opportunities to be involved in the planning of change and to put forward their thoughts and ideas, and appreciated David Benyon's willingness to engage with them as 'equals in professional development', despite difficult circumstances. This consultation did, to some extent, have an integrative effect (Sikes, Measor and Woods 1985) in that many staff felt that they were more part of a common venture and were working across departmental divides, and did succeed in uniting staff opinion around some of the proposed changes.

But it also had its drawbacks. As David Benyon noted there were at least as many members of staff who favoured a more traditional system where the head played a more dominant role, told teachers what they were expected to do and defined the structures within which they could operate. Some staff did not wish to be consulted. Others felt that decisions had, in fact, already been made, that David Benyon knew what he wanted and was going to move the school in that way no matter what their views were. And many teachers were concerned that because meetings were being held in school time and students were missing lessons this was having a destructive influence on their education and on the general running of the school. Consultation at this price, they argued, was not worth it. David Benyon's dilemma on the issue of staff participation in school decision-making was compounded.

These then were the main strategies that David Benyon employed. He was, however, faced with some very real constraints in his attempt to change the school.

Constraints on Change

In an early interview David Benyon compared Milltown High with his previous school and summarised some of the difficulties which he felt it was facing:

Milltown High is contracting, rolls are falling, it's in a depressing, decaying part of the city, despite the housing being fairly new many people don't choose to live here. Many of the students are very difficult and have a firm view that education is pretty pointless. Many staff did not choose to be here, a lot of them are not very good and can't get out. Promotion is very restricted and a lot of staff have in their own way given up, they don't bother to deal with anything on the corridor, and don't bother to do any curriculum development.

This rather gloomy view highlights the very real constraints which affected the realisation of the sort of school he wanted to create. In this section I want to describe some of these constraints in more detail.

As I said earlier most new heads are forced to work within a system of established practices and procedures created by their predecessors. David Benyon was no exception. Moreover, as in most organisations, a certain amount of inertia developed, and practices continued simply because, in the words of a deputy head, 'that's the way we've always done things'. Proposals for change often had to overcome this in-built conservatism.

There was also at Milltown High an absence of what David Benyon called 'a culture of change'. He explained that in other schools where he had worked there had been a general agreement that change in terms of 'thinking things through from first principles', reviewing practices and procedures and continually updating curriculum was a good thing. This was not generally the case, he felt, at Milltown High:

It was a real culture shock for me coming from my last school where there was a culture of change and development. Virtually everybody there believed that that was a good thing. And at my first school as well there was the same sort of feeling that if somebody came up with a good idea that was

clearly along the road that we were going....they would be given their heads to develop it.

So he became, 'personally and professionally frustrated when staff at Milltown High talk about things like mixed ability teaching and say 'God, how on earth will we cope' when that's the sort of question staff at my first school were talking about 20 years ago'.

There was at Milltown High an 'absence of a commitment to change' and sometimes a cynicism about change which, when linked to a general lack of knowledge concerning current educational thinking and a belief in the superiority of practical experience over theoretical concerns (c.f. A. Hargreaves 1984), meant that some of the proposals which David Benyon put forward were greeted with scepticism and reservations from many staff. David Benyon quoted one senior member of staff (who left shortly before my field work began) as saying:

'Oh, well we've tried mixed ability and it didn't work so we scrapped it, and we've tried integrated studies and that didn't work so we abandoned that, and we've tried tutors taking a period a week of Personal and Social Education and it didn't work so we dropped it'.

Many ideas which were central to his educational philosophy were dismissed in this way. This was an attitude with which he was unfamiliar. Opposition to change was, in fact, largely based on pragmatic rather than ideological arguments. Staff were concerned more about the impact of proposed changes on their ability to maintain order and classroom control, rather than their supposed educational or social value (c.f. Ball 1981). They tended to accept change that appeared to offer practical assistance in these terms, but reject it if it did not.

Rather conservative staff attitudes were compounded in the case of some by 'low morale' and a generally negative feeling about their work and the school, created by the often overwhelming problems of 'survival' (Woods 1979) in the face of difficult inner city students and the worsening status of teaching and teachers' pay and working conditions. This meant that often staff ignored incidents around the school that David Benyon felt they ought to deal with and

also that the implementation of some of the approaches that he was advocating was limited. This was something which he now viewed with some sympathy;

At my last school, because in terms of discipline or behaviour of students it was very much based upon a tutorial or a relationships model, that virtually all of the staff saw their job, if a student was any sort of problem or in trouble, as talking it through, and there was an enormous amount of talking things through and relatively little stress on formal punishments and keeping people in. Until I came to Milltown High I'd never seen anybody writing lines or whatever. When I first came I found the stress of a lot of staff on the formal punishment bit very uncongenial and I hoped more staff would adopt a sort of talking through and discussing sort of strategy....Obviously there are some staff who do that....but there are a lot of staff who just don't have the confidence to do it, and I think there are an awful lot of very naughty children, if naughty is the right word, who if you ask them to do anything, however politely or however friendly you are, just say 'why should I?' or just refuse to do something perfectly simple and straight forward like sit down and get on. I can now understand why some staff feel overwhelmed and need the support of sanctions and discipline and all the rest, and I don't particularly like working in a school where that is true. I hope that that is something long term we can change.

This was a situation which was often made more difficult by the lack of available places in 'support units' and centres for 'difficult' students and the fact that the school was being asked to cater for far more of these 'types' of students than in the past.

Another significant constraint on the implementation of change was the teachers' industrial action. In every term bar one of David Benyon's headship there had been some form of industrial action ranging from one day strikes to bans on lunchtime supervision and attending meetings out of school hours. This had meant a change in emphasis in his plans, from 'radical change' to 'keeping the system ticking over as best I can'. Much of the time his primary concern had become maintaining the stability of the school, keeping things going as best he could, rather than thinking about how they might be changed. It had not been possible to have a staff conference, which ideally he would have liked,

in order to thrash out some form of agreement on the philosophy and development of the school,^{and} working parties were abandoned and meetings were restricted. So although, as we have seen, meetings did take place, they were less frequent and much shorter than was often required. One characteristic of meetings during my field work was that they often finished rigidly on time. It was not unusual for a meeting held in the last lesson of the school day to finish half way through a planned agenda with staff getting up and walking out before the meeting itself had closed. Moreover, the industrial action threw up a whole range of problems to which David Benyon and other senior staff had to respond - supply staff had to be found, and then supervised in the school, classes had to be sent home, incidents which occurred in and out of school when students were sent home had to be dealt with, lunches had to be supervised and then lunchtime supervisors appointed. These were all time consuming and meant that a climate suitable for the realisation of radical change was difficult to establish.

The industrial action also signalled a profound change in the way some of the teachers saw their work. Very few were willing to spend time on extra-curricular activities or to mix with students out of school time (1), the sort of things which David Benyon thought would help to build up the types of relationships that he wanted. Many staff were also adopting a more instrumental attitude to their work. They were more likely to say things like, 'I will only do what I am specifically paid for over and above my classroom work' and on the idea of a staff weekend conference, 'Well if they want us to talk about the future of the school they can give us the day off. We'll happily come in on Friday but we're not giving up our weekend'. Despite head and senior staff support for the industrial action, an atmosphere of 'us and them', 'management' and 'rank and file teachers', did develop, with a tendency for the rank and file to reject or resist changes originating from management. Further, many activities that had in the past been done on a voluntary basis outside of normal school hours were now being defined as non-contractual. This meant for example, that staff refused to attend parents evenings and write reports unless time was specifically allocated to them during the school day. It also meant that curriculum development work outside school hours was out. A constant debate at school union meetings concerned the extent to which teachers should participate in the types of changes that were being proposed in the school. However, despite all this, many staff did continue to work on developments in

their own time partly, as we have seen, because David Benyon did not undermine the industrial action, but also, in some cases, because of their own strong commitments and career interests.

As a result of these constraints David Benyon had been forced to hold back on some of the changes that he would have liked to introduce and he was forced to accept that some of the styles of working that he wished to develop were unlikely to materialise. He held back, for example, from changing the senior management structure to create a greater balance between pastoral and curriculum staff. He also shelved a scheme to introduce one lesson per week of tutorial time, which he thought would give personal tutors more time to be involved and to build up strong relationships with the students in their tutor groups, because the majority of staff were against the idea, and, as he explained, in order to be successful such a scheme, had to command the support of a large proportion of the staff. Ideally he would have liked to see the extension of the I.C. idea to the rest of the school, thus creating 'mini-schools' on the Countestorpe^h model, but this was a development that was 'not practical politics' at Milltown High and he could not see the idea being realised 'in the present climate and with the staff that are here at the moment'. On the idea of creating a 'more relationships-based school' he admitted that little progress had been made. David Benyon had been forced to adopt a more pragmatic and ad hoc approach to changing the school. Implicitly he bent his ideas to those of his staff and the practical circumstances in the school. As he explained:

Many staff would say I've been forcing through change without consulting. I would say that through senior staff or just picking up vibes by talking to people that I have held back from as many changes as I have sponsored and therefore I have implicitly accepted the will of the majority whether through formal meetings and votes or not. The democratic side has been as dominant as the imposition of change.

These constraints also affected the way he interpreted his own role as headteacher. When he arrived in the school he found that practices established by previous heads conditioned the expectations of teachers, students, parents and others towards the way he performed the role. It was not possible,

therefore, for him to define completely how he wished to perform the role of headteacher. As he explained:

I can remember feeling in my first couple of weeks here that the job was in one sense much easier than I thought it would be, because I thought, 'God how do you be a head, how do you know what to do?', and the answer is that most of the time the expectations of other people as to what you should do are very clear and expressed by the way they defer to what you say or the way they ask you can I do this or whatever, and most of the time you can respond to what you have to do anyway.

Whilst he had a conception of the role he wanted to play, deriving from his experiences in other schools and his reading, he was forced to modify his view to fit the reality of Milltown High. This involved, 'being much more authoritarian to both staff and students' than ideally he wanted to be, and operating in a less democratic, more traditional style. It sometimes involved using methods with which he felt uneasy. For example:

The whole thing about detentions and codes of discipline and so on. I mean I found that quite shocking when I came to Milltown High and I've forgotten now quite how shocking I did find it. I can remember one of the first things about a head of departments meeting when I first came here was a discussion about adding point 3(b) to the code of discipline or something for what you should do in lessons, and how students should be punished and if they ignore the punishment of the head of department, and then what happens next and so on. And I just found that alien, totally alien.....But now, with the grading and detention system, I am trying to make something like that work. At my last school....everybody would have said, 'God, that's not the way we want to be', because tutors would have spent all the time it needed with the students and taken them home and talked through things with their parents.

I'm now conscious of talking to students in an authoritarian way that I wouldn't have dreamt of doing at my last school....It is completely alien to the way I want to deal with students, and I do that partly because I'm exasperated by the fact that some students just won't do anything that you ask them to do, and partly I suppose it's a response to what seems to be

staff perception of my role....When I started I got the impression that quite a lot of staff....thought I was soft and airy-fairy and lots of lovely ideas but nowhere near the ground.

David Benyon thus had to adjust his ways of working to fit the day-to-day reality of Milltown High and the expectations of others.

However, these expectations were often conflicting. There were those who would have preferred him to play a more open, informal role as a professional equal, but there were also those who wanted him to be more directive and autocratic in his relationships with staff and students. It was a frequent staffroom complaint of the former group that he was imposing change, that he did not involve staff in decision making and that he was distant and unavailable, and of the latter group that he was not firm enough with the students, that his decision-making was uncertain, and that he should assume more responsibility for setting the norms of the institution. His style of headship was, in fact, a compromise between the often conflicting expectations of others, the pressures of the every day events that confronted him, and his own ideas about what he wanted the job to be.

One of the greatest pressures as far as David Benyon himself was concerned was time. This meant that, 'there is an enormous gap between what I actually spend my time doing and ideally how I would like to spend my time'. He explained:

I would define the biggest problem as the allocation of time, the management of time, and how to make some time, even every week would be nice let alone every day, where I'm doing things that are helping to improve the school or change the school....Sometimes for day after day, or even week after week you don't even have time to make a particular phone call or something because you are always responding.

It also meant that often aspects of his job that he felt were important were not done or done inadequately. Getting out around the school to talk to staff and students, for example, was something which he thought was important, but was not able to do as frequently as he wanted to. Plans were often made but were blown off course as emergencies cropped up or visitors arrived or parents phoned. The job seemed often to be over loaded. As he said:

If you added together all the ideal bits of the role....and especially the bits that have to be done in school time ...it would add up to a lot more than the school day....I suppose if somebody was well enough organised and prepared to give the amount of time to it, to do their paper work outside the normal school day, and all their thinking outside the school day, but then you are talking about setting yourself up to do a 70/80 hour week, which I did try for the first year that I was here but I didn't think that I would last very long....and you can only do that if you're not prepared to have any life apart from school.

These then were the constraints that impinged upon David Benyon's attempts to change Milltown High school and to enact his interpretation of the role of headteacher.

Finally, it must be stressed that the influence of any head over the school which he formally leads is limited especially given the size and extensive subdivision of many secondary schools. Despite David Benyon's attempts to change the school he had in fact made only a minimal impact on the working practices of many of the teachers. He concluded that:

At the end of the day heads don't have the power that they used to have....well I don't know if they ever did have. Probably heads had more authority/power 20 or 30 years ago, but at that time there was a much greater consensus about what schools were for and what the job was all about....Whereas now there's a much greater diversity about what the job is and especially at a time of industrial action when people have said, 'No I'm not going to do that. I'm not going to do lunchtime duty, I'm not going to do detention duty or whatever'....Many teachers are saying, 'No we don't have to do that' and it exposes just how lacking in power heads really are.

Conclusion

In the first half of the chapter I have tried to describe some of the ways in which the head teacher at Milltown High attempted to operationalise his philosophy of education and his ideas about how a comprehensive school ought to be organised and run. I have described some of the changes that David Benyon introduced, the strategies that he employed, the constraints that he faced and

the accomodations that he had to make. Head teachers clearly have more power than anyone else to determine the structure and organisation of the school, but this power is restricted. The extent to which a head, taking over the leadership of an established school, can influence the workings of that institution, or 'redefine' the school, is limited. In fact the school may change him/her more than he/she can change the school. Head teachers like other workers are socialised into the institutions that they lead. They may be forced to adjust, to adopt the strategies of 'strategic compliance' and 'internalised adjustment' (Lacey 1977). This was clearly the case with David Benyon. Whilst he was able to influence substantially the structure and form of Milltown High school, and to implement some change in difficult circumstances, he also had to accept many of the existing practices and procedures, even though he had reservations about them. Difficult circumstances and staff opposition, sometimes overtly expressed, but more often informal, forced him to compromise and abandon some of the changes he wanted to make. Moreover, in some respects his view of appropriate practice changed during his two years in the school. He had come to accept that certain procedures, which he previously thought unacceptable, were, in Lacey's words, 'for the best'. In the eyes of many established teachers at the school he had become 'a much better head now than when he first arrived'. In their eyes, again using Lacey's term, 'he really was good'.

The Headteacher's Approach to Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education

I now want to describe how David Benyon interpreted and tried to implement L.E.A. and school policy on Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education. As I have mentioned already, he was appointed to the school partly on the basis of his commitment to such policies and on several occasions in staff meetings he made it clear that he wanted to see the school do its utmost to implement them. But the policy statements did not provide detailed guidelines for practice. As David Benyon said:

As a general backcloth, a general atmosphere in which you can try and do things I think that's fine. But I don't find anything in what the L.E.A. says or what John Fredricks (the inspector for Multicultural Education) as their Multicultural representative does or says which is any use at all in actually deciding well what do they actually want us to do in school. The least helpful comment was from Stephen Knight when he was chair of governors....he said 'Well we've got a policy haven't you done it yet!'....you know that sort of attitude well the policy is enough and if you've got that well everyone will sort of implement it tomorrow.

Furthermore, the L.E.A. adopted a rather 'laissez faire' approach to policy implementation. They had not required the school to report on their progress in implementing policy beyond asking them to produce an institutional policy on racism. David Benyon believed that having a policy was fine but that the L.E.A. ought to be following it up. A policy was, he said, 'necessary but not sufficient'.

He also argued that this lack of specificity was a feature of the whole debate surrounding Anti-Racism and that many academics who espoused Anti-Racism had failed to translate general principles into guidelines for practice at the chalk face.

He suggested:

It seems to me that people can agree very easily on the principles, but I don't know how that actually translates into practice in classrooms or schools generally and I am not sure that your Chris Mullards and

everybody else knows much better than you or me. You know if you said to Chris Mullard 'O.K. actually in a classroom on Monday morning in an English lesson or a Maths lesson or a Science lesson what would you expect to see, what would you hope would be going on that's different from what's going on now?', and I'm not sure that they would come up with anything.

Many writers, he felt, were not involved in school teaching, and books therefore tended to be thin on grassroots practice. A similar point, he claimed, could be made about some of the members of the local community who advocated Anti-Racist Education, but had not been helpful in working out a school programme. In addition he felt that, unlike many other educational innovations, there was an absence of documented research into Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education and its efficacy, which the school could draw on for guidance. In short, David Benyon felt that the school was very much on its own in attempting to put such policies into practice.

How then did David Benyon interpret Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education? He had not taught in a multi-ethnic school before and his only INSET on the issue had been a week-long D.E.S. course immediately prior to coming to the school and so his interpretations stemmed largely from his general educational views, and his reading. He saw policies on Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism as part of a general commitment to equal rights and equal opportunities or, as he said, 'fair chances for all' which influenced strongly his ideas about how the school should be organised. He was concerned that all students no matter what their sex, ethnic group or social background should receive equal chances to realise their full potential, and that the organisation of the school should not inhibit their chances. His concern, for example, that in a streamed or banded school there might be a tendency for Afro-Caribbean children to be misplaced in lower streams or bands, and thereby suffer inferior treatment and restricted opportunities, was influential in his decision to abandon the banding system that existed in the school when he arrived and to go for mixed ability grouping wherever possible. He explained:

My experience and research indicates that streaming tends to work against working class and black students.... and for reasons other than ability children tend to get placed in lower bands or streams....I was struck in my

first term here taking over a 2nd year Humanities group and people in it like Winston Jones who said 'Am I getting moved up?' and he said quite explicitly, 'By ability I should be in the top band.... and I know its because I talk back to teachers.....and I won't do as I'm told for the sake of it I want to know why'. Now the particular way in which he would ask why would be interpreted by a lot of teachers as being aggressive, whereas he would probably see it within his own cultural mores as being merely assertive and not aggressive....Now you always use a bundle of criteria for determining streams so that is one reason that I wanted us to go mixed ability as far as we could....because it avoids situations where you are actually discriminating and choosing....The more streamed you are, the more rigid you are in that kind of procedure the more likely you are to end up doing things which are racist.

Another change which David Benyon encouraged, and which derived from the same basic ideas, was the change in the 'Remedial Department' from a department which took students out of mainstream classes and placed them full time in the equivalent of a bottom stream, to one which offered extra support to individual students as far as possible within ordinary classes. The department was renamed 'Learning Support'. This change was, of course, in line with moves nationally, and within the L.E.A. itself, to educate children with 'special needs' alongside 'ordinary' children. He therefore saw one aspect of a policy on racism as ensuring that the school organisation provided equal access to curricula and educational resources, and avoided formal status differentiation which might involve unfair discrimination.

A second aspect of David Benyon's interpretation of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education was his view that the school should ensure that ethnic minority students enjoyed a 'parity of esteem' with white students. This, he suggested, should come through personal relationships between teachers and students and through the school curriculum. He therefore expected all staff to be 'sensitive to race and gender issues' by which he meant:

To be aware of the gross issues like do I ask more questions of boys than girls or white children than black children, and more sensitive issues than that, like the question of the way students treat each other and who sits where and things like that. If an issue did come up, like a student

called another a name I would hope that every teacher would feel equally confident to leap in and lead a discussion on what had just happened.

He also expected staff to incorporate into the curriculum that they taught aspects of and information about the different cultural groups that made up the school so that there should be, in his words:

A parity of esteem so that the black students feel valued and the white students feel there are things in other cultures that they can value....so that other cultures' religions and traditions are understood and valued. That should come through Humanities and English....So it's getting everyone to understand each other,.... and ideally to value and esteem each other.

This was David Benyon's view of Multicultural Education which he strongly supported, but this by itself was not enough, he maintained. He felt that Anti-Racism, whilst including Multiculturalism, should do more. He explained:

I've described my idea of Multicultural Education, but that's rather passive. You know, within our island of this little school we can get everyone who comes here to value each other and do everything we can to help everyone to understand what it means to be Vietnamese or Afro-Caribbean or whatever and to understand and appreciate each other, but you haven't actually tried to do anything about the wide world outside, the world that students actually come from or the wider whole global perspective.

For him Anti-Racism involved teaching about 'great world issues' such as peace and conflict, inequality, human rights and race relations, and about issues of concern in the local community. He gave an example of what he meant by this latter aspect by referring to a local campaign to prevent the deportation of a young Sri Lankan man. A teacher had come to him to ask if the students in her class could become involved in a march in support of the campaign. He had agreed provided that the students had had the opportunity to debate the issue and to make their own decision. He felt the school had an important role in 'equipping students with the knowledge and skills necessary for effective community participation'. He believed very strongly in Peace Education and had

written several articles and booklets on the issue and argued that Peace Education was 'an extension or an elaboration of aspects of related fields such as World Studies and Multicultural Education'. He felt that subject areas like Humanities and English would play the major role in such teaching, but that the other subject areas had a responsibility to ensure that texts and visual resources were 'non-racist and non-sexist'. Anti-Racist Education for David Benyon was thus associated with education about controversial social and political issues. On this he added the following proviso:

I think it is very important in the classroom to be open minded in the way we teach and what we say....On the example of the march....there should have been no question that we'd said 'Right a 4th year Humanities group all go and get in the mini-bus we're going to take part in a march'.To take part as observers or to interview people that would have been legitimate, but I've been involved in the teaching of the Nuclear issue and although I have very strongly held views I think it is very important to present both views if they are areas of current political controversy.....and I suppose that if you were teaching about the National Front I think it would be right to actually present 'Well this is what they say'.....for example, 'black people have taken all the jobs or all the houses', and then look at the figures and say, 'Do the figures justify it', and if they don't ask, 'Where do feelings like that come from'....which would leave open the possibility that some students would end up feeling 'Yeah, well they're right aren't they'. Appalling though that would be I think if it's education then the way you do it has to leave open that possibility.

So, for example, when teaching about South Africa he felt that it was important to present the Afrikaner view. Not to do so could, he said, 'legitimately be described as indoctrination'. Education was about giving students the opportunity to debate both sides of an issue, think things through and to put themselves in the position of trying to understand the points of view of other people before making up their own minds. The teacher's role was to facilitate this process.

This then was David Benyon's view of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education. Before moving on to describe how these views influenced his

practice as a head I think it is important to mention several points that he made during interview about the difficulties of operationalising Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education and about the limitations of what it could achieve. In terms of equal opportunities he argued that racism in schools was very difficult to identify. For example in terms of suspensions he speculated:

If the number of black students who are suspended is pro rata double the number of white students, then that is a prima facie case of racism...or there's a case to be examined. If you examined each of those individual cases of suspension you would find that at some point in the history of each of those cases the head of year or deputy head made a decision and what you've got to look at is....are there ways in which they behaved in those cases which are different from the way they would have behaved had those students been white?....It would come down to a detailed examination of the way particular people behave in each case, and that's very difficult to do.

He felt, on the basis of his experience in schools that few teachers subscribed to racist views, but nevertheless 'there are ways in which schools act to reproduce the basic social relations of society and production' because teachers and schools based their judgements of students on the basis of middle class norms of language and behaviour and that inevitably place black and working class students at a disadvantage:

Teachers have sets of expectations of ways of behaving or what makes a good student or how young people ought to behave, and express that in kinds of language that have a class flavour to them. They are middle class rather than working class, and working class children will find it relatively difficult to understand what they're on about, both the language and the assumptions behind the language....That's what I meant by black students on the whole being in the same position as white students only more so.

However, the problem with this argument, he suggested, was that it resulted in a dilemma for teachers - a desire to value the languages and cultures of the students, whilst at the same time giving them the maximum chance of success

in a society where standard English and 'middle class culture' was the norm (2) (see chapter 1). He found it difficult to see how such disadvantage could be avoided. Thus he believed that the school had to make it clear to parents and local people that:

In terms of conventional achievement, exams and all the rest of it, if students from Crick Park estate are going to have an equal chance with students from Daneford (a middle class area of the city) they have got to succeed in terms of certain things which are taken as standard and desirable in our society and that includes language. They've got to be good at writing and reading and speaking standard English, and that's not a value judgement on whatever else they may speak.....So perhaps if all teachers and all students and all parents were clear that that was something schools were doing, not because teachers were middle class and boring and can't work it out for themselves, but because, look we've got to give you an equal chance of achievement, getting on or whatever.

David Benyon also thought that schools were limited in the influence they had on the attainment of many students. The achievement of equal opportunities in schools would not by itself rectify the underachievement of many Afro/Caribbean students. There were other factors involved:

The pressures that students perceive in terms of unemployment, racism in their own lives, their own perceptions of their own chances, their own sense of identity apart from school, are all important.

He suggested that for many Afro/Caribbean students in the area there was a strong sense of 'community' which sometimes expressed itself as a 'counter culture' giving them 'an alternative validation of worth' which meant that some rejected school, saying 'I don't need what school can give me because I've got my own thing going for me!'. So:

Between these two pressures ...on the one hand unemployment and racism, and on the other the strength of their own culture and the sense of identity that can give them....it may be that the school can do little....In some cases the school may have a very marginal influence. So just because

some students end up doing worse than their potential doesn't necessarily implicate the school. It might well do, but not necessarily.

A further point David Benyon made was that although he believed that schools should do all in their power to educate against racism, they could not be expected to solve the problem of racial inequality in society:

Every institution, schools especially in terms of education, should do their very best to combat racism and to fight against racism and should make sure that their employment practices are scrupulously fair and so on. So you can say that I think schools ought to do their very best. But you can also go on to say that schools are not the cause of the problem and therefore schools cannot be expected to be the solution to the problem.....Undoubtedly British society is racist, both in the personal experiences of individual black people and its sexist in the experience of individual women, and in all sorts of intangible ways that you can't put your finger on, in terms of say Halsey's definition of equal opportunities, you know that you do not have proportionately equal numbers of black people or women in the House of Commons or in the Crown Court or wherever and therefore society is racist and sexist.

Moreover, there was also the problem of class inequality with which he felt racial inequality was closely entangled:

Basically I see it as an economic problem and therefore as a class problem not as a race problem....in other words most black people in this country are working class and face all the problems that working class people do in getting fair shares or fair chances and black people have an additional disadvantage, but basically the problems that black people face are not different from the problems most working class people face.

This then is the sort of philosophical context in which David Benyon's practice as a headteacher must be placed. As we have already seen, his views very much influenced his ideas on good practice within the school, the type of school organisation that he developed, and the way he encouraged his staff to work, but how specifically did he transfer his ideas on Multicultural and Anti-

Racist Education into his own practice as a leader and manager in the institution? It is to some examples of this that I will now turn.

The Headteacher and the Practice of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education

One of the main responsibilities of a head teacher is the appointment of staff to the school. Whilst David Benyon did not adopt conscious strategies to identify and sift out job applicants who might subscribe to racist views he thought that the methods that were used to appoint new staff would be effective in doing this. First, in every job advertisement it was made clear that the school was multi-ethnic, that the existing staff were attempting to develop Multicultural and Anti-Racist work and that this would be given a fairly high priority in the school. Here is one example, an advertisement which appeared for the Head of the English department which became vacant towards the end of my field work.

Required for January 1987 to lead the English Department, which is a successful, highly regarded department, and has pioneered anti-racist and anti-sexist teaching strategies. A developing aspect of the role is liaison with the Integrated Curriculum in years one and two. Experience of resource-based learning is important. Scale 4 would be available for an innovative teacher able to take on a wider curriculum development role within the school.

Milltown High is a mixed multiracial inner city school. All staff appointed are expected to support and contribute to the development of equal opportunities, anti-racist and community policies

And in the further particulars that were sent to prospective applicants David Benyon wrote the following paragraph:

Milltown High has been closely involved in multicultural and anti-racist education for a number of years. Five years ago, a working party of staff produced a booklet on 'Multicultural Education in the 1980's', which was a pioneering achievement at that time. The school has had a strong anti-racist policy statement since that time too.

More recently we have taken major initiatives in equal opportunities and anti-sexist work, in particular running a number of girls' events and a boys' day.

We are looking at ways in which all departments can contribute to these whole school policies. In both areas Milltown has strong policy statements and is very supportive of schools like Milltown High which are developing programmes of activities.

The head argued that such advertisements would put off conscious racists and also people who, while not consciously racist, did not feel that they could handle the sorts of issues that would be expected of them. In job interviews it was assumed that applicants who were of racist disposition would have other views and opinions on educational and community issues which would reveal themselves. As David Benyon said, 'I would be surprised if someone who had thought through something like resource-based learning and of fairly radical educational views would be racist.', and, as we have seen, these were the sort of teachers that he was looking for. If there was any doubt about an applicant's attitudes then someone on the interviewing panel would put a more direct question. For example, if it was an English post someone would ask a question like - 'Mrs.Green this morning explained the department's policy on the use of class readers (see chapter 6). Would you like to comment on it?'. In fact Jennifer Green, the head of the English department, described to me a case where a candidate for an English post, who was well qualified was not appointed because it was felt that she displayed a 'rather patronising' attitude to the ethnic minority community in the area. In these ways the head maintained the school managed to appoint staff who were committed to Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism.

His policy on appointments, however, went further than this. The Local Authority itself had recently developed a specific code of practice on job recruitment and promotion which was designed to support the City Council's policy for achieving equality of opportunity in employment. Briefly this involved first of all analysing a job vacancy to ascertain what was required, the extent to which ethnic minority people, women and the disabled were employed in the particular type of work involved, and what factors might explain imbalances that there might be. Secondly, a 'Job Description' and a 'Person Specification' were drawn up. This latter document was to state clearly the qualifications and qualities required for the job and ensure that these were not unnecessarily restrictive. Thirdly, attention had to be paid to the make up of selection panels so that the potential biases of predominately male,

white and able-bodied panels could be avoided. However, this code of practice was only circulated to schools in May 1986. What policy did David Benyon adopt prior to this? He explained:

It's certainly something I've borne in mind right from the first term I was here, without the Authority saying anything or expecting anything, that in terms of both women and black teachers...I've tried, wherever possible, if candidates were equal, choosing a woman candidate or a black candidate. I think over the 2½ years we've made quite a bit of progress. It's still a very small proportion, but counting teaching and non-teaching staff - it was 2 black staff and now its 6 - so that's a significant change. (In referring to non teaching staff here David Benyon means secretarial and technician staff and is not including cleaners and dinner staff)

David Benyon had adopted a similar approach to the Local Authority's code. He looked carefully at job descriptions and specifications to make sure that what was being asked for did not discriminate against ethnic minority people, women and disabled. But he described this as, 'a passive policy or a clearing away of the undergrowth policy.....It doesn't have anything to do with positive discrimination or positive action.' He had tried to go further:

I have tried to say well if this person (woman or black person) had the sort of experience or education or the sort of breaks that men or white people would take for granted, then they would now be in a much more advantageous position than they actually are and therefore I will try to judge them as I think they would have been. Now Susan Parker (deputy head) would be one example of that. She was acting head of English but on a protected Scale 3 and as far as officially the school was concerned she was on a Scale 2 as second in the English department. At reorganisation she was on a Scale 3 as Head of Lower School English at Wakeland High School (a neighbouring school) butshe did not get promotion,...perhaps because she was pregnant or she interviews badly.....but she ended up on a protected Scale 3. Now from what I'd seen of her around the school, her energy and her ideas and everything else it seemed to me that she was one of the casualties of reorganisation and whereas there were many people at

Milltown High and across the city who got a lucky break, who did well at reorganisation, she obviously did badly.....I said this to myself that perhaps she should have got that lucky break. Let's say she had got a Scale 4 at reorganisation she would now be in a position to apply for this (deputy headship) just as much as other candidates. I consciously and privately went through that thought process and have done on other occasions.

David Benyon went through the same sort of process on another occasion when he appointed an Afro/Caribbean member of the non-teaching staff. Several white candidates for the job were extremely well qualified and experienced on paper. But, after considering carefully the skills required for the job, David Benyon concluded that such qualifications were unnecessary. He felt that the experience, even though it had not been in a school, and the qualities which the Afro/Caribbean person had, equipped her well for the particular post. In addition, he felt that had that person been white and middle class they would have been able to achieve comparable academic qualifications, and that given the nature of Milltown High and the ethnic imbalance amongst the staff, it was a significant opportunity to appoint an ethnic minority staff member.

David Benyon wanted to appoint the 'best' staff to the school and emphasised that qualifications, experience, educational philosophy and approach were the factors that were of greatest importance. But his view of what was 'best' was flexible. He considered carefully what qualifications, experience and qualities were actually required for particular posts and avoided an over-reliance on academic qualifications and length of service in his assessments. He was prepared to take into account background disadvantages which particular candidates, especially those who were from an ethnic minority or female, might have faced, and to make his judgements on the basis of what contribution he felt the candidate was likely to make to the school. If the candidate was from an ethnic minority this was regarded as an asset, but not one of overwhelming importance.

Perhaps a second major aspect of a head's role is to set the 'tone' of the school, in other words to make clear to both staff and students the basic norms of behaviour in the school. In his study of Bishop McGregor School, Burgess (1983) showed how the head teacher made clear to staff and students how he wanted them to work and behave. David Benyon fulfilled a similar,

though less directive, role to the head described by Burgess. His views on racism were made clear to both staff and students. The school's policy on racism was contained in the staff file which was given to all staff at the beginning of each academic year. This made clear that racism was completely unacceptable amongst staff and students. Furthermore the policy stated that:

Instances of racist or sexist verbal abuse and comment are not to be ignored or trivialised, but must be dealt with by appropriate staff as speedily as possible and in the most positive/educative manner. If the matter is judged to be serious or recurrent it should be reported to the headteacher.

In several assemblies during my field work David Benyon made specific mention of the issue of racism. As all staff were expected to attend school assembly the remarks he made can be seen as directed to all members of the school community. Following the first assembly of the 1985 school year I recorded the following field notes.

David Benyon, standing at the front of the hall, began his address by welcoming everyone back after the holidays and welcoming the new first years to their new school. He said that what he wanted to talk about was what school was for and what was expected of students in school. He said some people say that they just came to school to get exam results and that yes, exam results were important. He stressed that you could do as well at Milltown High as anywhere and he referred to last year's exam results which contained many grade 'A's to emphasise the point. But, he explained, school was not just a matter of getting good exam results. He hoped that the students would learn social skills such as confidence in dealing with other people, and he hoped they would learn personal and family skills, which, he said, were especially important for boys to learn as traditionally schools had only taught those things to girls. He also hoped that they would learn communication skills so that they would be able to cope in the outside world and also if they thought it necessary to be able to do something about the world that they lived in for example by organising petitions and campaigns. Finally, he explained that he thought it was important that students built up their knowledge of the world and

referred to the current situation in Southern Africa and the recent troubles in Handsworth as being worthy of study.

David Benyon then went on to talk about some of the expectations that he had of students. He said they should work hard, do their best, and behave reasonably, meaning that they should treat others in the way they would like to be treated by them. He went on to remind the students of some of the school rules such as no running down the corridors, that students were not allowed to use the school office unless they had a valid reason, that they were to be at school and at lessons on time and that they were not allowed off the school premises at break times. He also said that serious disciplinary offences such as physical assaults on staff and bullying would be dealt with by suspension or exclusion. In the category of serious offences he included racism and he said that any abuse of a racist nature whether it involved black students or white students would be treated very seriously. He was, he said, especially concerned with racism directed against Asian students, between black students, and from students to staff. He also made it clear that he was also concerned with sexism. He then said that one of the worst things as far as he was concerned was disobeying reasonable requests from staff as that often meant that the education of others was ruined because of the time that was wasted. Finally, he explained some of the problems that he thought would occur during the year because of the teacher s' industrial action and that he hoped everyone would respond to them sensibly and maturely, and he introduced new staff and explained to students that he expected them to be treated with respect and for students to help them out where they could and not to take advantage of them. He then left the hall and the students were dismissed by Susan Parker the deputy head.

Assemblies are only one way of communicating the norms and expectations of the school. As Durkheim (1931) pointed out one of the functions of punishment in any society is to draw attention to shared norms and values. The norm of Anti-Racism at Milltown High was emphasised by the fact that David Benyon did punish quite harshly any student who made racist remarks or used racist abuse. During my field work a number of students were suspended or sent home because of such incidents. This seemed to initially shock some of the students as some regarded such abuse as a normal part of peer group banter. However, David Benyon maintained that it was important to communicate that 'it's a legitimate issue and that certain types of language and behaviour are totally unacceptable'. Another example of this is the way David Benyon dealt with an incident involving some graffiti written about an Afro/Caribbean member of staff. The graffiti was discovered at the back of the teacher's classroom in an area that he often used to put children who had been troublesome. When it was discovered David Benyon and the pastoral staff spent a lot of time interviewing all the children that had been placed in that area to try to find the culprits. In fact the author of the racist graffiti was not discovered, but as David Benyon explained:

The fact that they know that we followed it up with such determination and we didn't treat that bit of graffiti as just another bit of graffiti....we actually spent hours and hours chasing up and interviewing....that's a clear expression that we do take it seriously.

David Benyon also used assemblies to directly teach about issues that he felt were important. He used them in this sense to try to directly communicate the sort of knowledge and awareness that he thought the students ought to have, but also to make clear his own values and beliefs on certain issues. During the year South Africa was much in the news and this was the topic for one assembly that David Benyon took which I recorded in my field notes.

David Benyon entered the hall and stood at the front as normal. The chatting amongst the students gradually subsided. He started by reminding them how they ought to behave in an assembly i.e. that they should sit

quietly and wait for whoever was taking the assembly to arrive. He then explained to them that he wanted to talk to them today about South Africa as there was a special campaign being organised this week. But first he wanted to mention some other things. First Mr. Smith was organising a collection of beans and pulses as part of the Band Aid collection which he hoped they would all support. Second he wanted to say how saddened he was at the behaviour during the lunch hour on Monday and Tuesday when apples and cartons of milk were thrown about the school. A small minority of students only seemed to be able to behave when there were teachers around (no teacher were supervising school meals because of the teachers' industrial action). This meant that this small group of students had succeeded in stopping milk and fruit for the whole school. Furthermore if any of those students were caught their parents would be asked to come in to school to supervise them at lunchtime. David Benyon then went on to draw students' attention to the fact that while they were throwing food around there were people in the Third World who were starving, that there were droughts in Africa and the deserts were spreading. He said that many of the students were not very well off compared to others in this country, but that compared to many in the Third World they were very well off and he thought it was appalling that food should be thrown away like this. He then went on to talk about South Africa. He explained that it was a rich country but that it was mostly white people who were rich. It was also a country that claimed to be a democracy but it was peculiar because only white people could vote whereas in Britain everybody can vote. Another reason why South Africa was special, he explained, was that there were laws affecting people - affecting where they could go and where they could live and work - which depended on the colour of a person's skin. Black people, for example, were only allowed to live in 13% of the country whereas white people owned 87% of the country. This was an incredibly unfair situation. So, David Benyon asked, what could we in this country do about it? He said, the Government could refuse to buy from or sell to South Africa and some big organisations like the Co-op were doing just that. He then told the students about a strike of shop workers in Ireland. A group of women who worked in a shop on the checkouts decided not to pass South African goods. They were sacked, but went on strike and picketed in support of their view that the shop should not sell South

African goods. The effect of their action has been that many more shops have stopped selling South African goods. As individuals, David Benyon went on, we could stop buying things like South African fruit, Outspan oranges for example. This was only a small thing but it started people talking. He asked the students to think about it and said perhaps they could do something however small. David Benyon then left the hall and the students were dismissed by Susan Parker, the deputy head.

Another example of the way David Benyon's running of the school was influenced by Anti-Racism was the way he handled the issue of police involvement in the school, a topic which came to the forefront of his attention during the Autumn term of 1985, and which led to the setting up of a school-community-L.E.A. working party, a group which was still meeting at the time of writing. A number of factors contributed to David Benyon's decision to establish such a working party. Firstly, early in his headship in June 1984 a difficult incident occurred in which two boys smashed a large number of windows in the school. The school routinely reported the matter to the police, but certain confusions arose about consultation with parents which resulted in some criticism of the school. David Benyon subsequently clarified the school's procedures to ensure that parents had a clear opportunity to discuss cases like this before police were involved, but the incident served to highlight the sensitivity of school-police contact.

A number of issues concerning the police were being aired at a national and a local level. First, there was increasing concern expressed in some quarters (see Guardian 7th December 1985) about the extension of police powers under the new Public Order Bill. Secondly, there was a desire among many local politicians to see a greater control and accountability of the local police force. This was a feeling that was brought to the fore when a group of Metropolitan police officers assaulted 5 teenagers in Holloway and apparently evaded prosecution or discipline (see Guardian 4th - 8th February 1986). David Benyon expressed his views forcefully in a letter to a newspaper:

Is it any wonder, when the police are seen to be outside of effective public control, that hostility and cynicism towards them are common place among 'target' groups, like young (especially black) people? Or that some of us who are urged by the police to cooperate with them at local level in

the interests of 'good community relations' find it increasingly hard to think of any reason for doing so?

Thirdly, there was concern in the local area at the decision by the Chief Constable to issue his force with plastic bullets and over an incident at a local university in which a number of students were injured during a demonstration.

A number of incidents then occurred within the school. First, at very short notice David Benyon received an offer from the local police to come into school to do some road safety work. However, a number of staff were unhappy about this in view of the poor relationship that existed between the local community (especially the Afro/Caribbean community) and the police, a concern which David Benyon shared. He asked if the police could come into school in plain clothes, but they said they could not, and so the proposed visit was cancelled. This raised the whole issue of whether or to what extent the police should be involved in the school curriculum. Following this two students (in separate incidents) were assaulted on the school premises by outsiders. This raised the question of whether the school should immediately call the police in such cases or whether liaison with local community workers might be more appropriate. Another difficult situation arose when rival groups of students from Milltown High and a neighbouring school were involved in a series of street fights. In this case David Benyon chose to defuse the situation by engaging the help of local youth workers who got all the students together to discuss their differences. He also held a special assembly in which he talked about the image that the students were presenting of themselves and black youth in general, and drew students' attention to the fact that the media could make a meal out of such incidents to the detriment of black people in general and the school in particular. He chose not to contact the police as he felt they might mishandle the situation as their record in terms of relationships with black young people was suspect. This raised the issue of whether the school should contact the police in cases of disorder involving students from the school. A final question was whether the school should be involved in local committees on which the police also sat. For a number of years one of the school's community teachers had been attending a meeting of the local Multi-Agencies Group which include representatives of Social Services, the police and the school and local agencies concerned with young people. However, some

community groups had begun to question the role of such a group and had withdrawn from this meeting. They were now questioning the involvement of Milltown High staff. Taking all these factors into account David Benyon was happy to support a young community teacher who suggested that the school should form a working party to examine the whole complex issue of the relationship between schools and the police.

Accordingly in February 1986 David Benyon circulated a letter outlining ideas on the formation of a working party. The document was sent to staff, governors, the L.E.A., the local police monitoring unit, and various parents groups, community representatives and councillors. In it David Benyon outlined some of the background to his proposals and made the following statement:

Involvement of the police in the life of the school is an issue which needs sensitive handling in any school. This is particularly true in an area like Chesham and Richmond Hill, where many people feel the police to be part of the problem not part of the solution to their problem.

He included certain proposed guidelines on police involvement that he himself had drawn up, but emphasised that these were proposals and could form the basis of discussion at the working group. He also outlined what he saw as the major areas of concern:

- (1) Police involvement in the curriculum.
- (2) Police involvement in emergencies.
- (3) Alternative responses from community groups.
- (4) The school's statutory obligation where a 'crime' has been committed.
- (5) The allocation to the school of appointed police officers, who are informed of, and committed to, our anti-racist and anti-sexist policies.

A preliminary meeting was held at the school in March which was attended by a small number of staff, community workers, representatives from the local Parents Centre, several governors, the school's district inspector, an education officer and a member of the Local Authority Police Monitoring Unit. David Benyon explained that he was keen to involve outside groups and agencies in

the formulation of policy, but that the working party could only be an advisory body. Whilst he expected that a policy devised by the group would be one he would support, he must retain the responsibility for actual decision-making. The meeting took the form of an open discussion in which nearly all those present participated and it was agreed to establish a working party based on the groups present (it was decided not to invite the police to become members of the group) and to hold discussions with staff, students and parents. Following this initial meeting the issue of police involvement in school was raised at the students' school council meetings and a special staff meeting was devoted to it. In June David Benyon sent a letter to all parents explaining that a working party had been established, that any comments or views that they had would be welcomed and that if they wished to join the working party that they could attend the next meeting. During the rest of 1986 a number of meetings of the working party were held in which aims and methods of procedure were agreed. At the time of writing the working party had split into sub-groups to consider some of the issues in more detail. Perhaps the most crucial thing to note, however, is that David Benyon, with the support of some of his staff, had entered into a process of consultation with local groups on an issue of school policy which was regarded by many in the area as extremely sensitive, and as such must be seen as an example of the way in which Anti-Racism was interpreted in the school.

There were also other ways in which David Benyon tried to put his ideas about Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education into practice. Firstly, in terms of his own dealings with children he always tried to be scrupulously fair. He was always willing to listen and receive the points of view of students, to hear their complaints and concerns. In disciplinary situations students were always given the opportunity to present their perspective, and David Benyon tried to visit the meetings of the school councils as often as he could, not to dominate or set the agenda for the meetings (c.f. Hunter 1979), but to hear the opinions of students and to answer their questions. He also adopted a self-reflective stance towards his own practice - 'I do try to think carefully about my own preconceptions and how they might affect the way I deal with students', he said. He also supported the activities of other members of staff who wanted to develop their work on Multicultural and Anti-Racist lines or to run special events which might make a contribution in this area. For example, he made it clear in various policy documents that whole school policies such as Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education were a priority in the development of the school, he encouraged staff to attend INSET sessions, book and resources displays, and meetings of local Anti-Racist groups, and he welcomed and provided time for various special events which staff organised such as an Asian Festival in the Autumn term of 1985 and an Anti-Apartheid week in the Summer term of 1986.

When planning the allocation of school capitation in the summer of 1986 he decided to retain 10% of the allowances that went to each of the main departments. The departments were allowed to have the money on condition that they spent it on materials or activities which contributed to the development of whole school policies. This was not, however an action that was greeted with much enthusiasm by the heads of department concerned. One likened it to the Conservative government's attempt to exercise greater control over local authorities by rate capping, others objected because they already felt that they were using their resources in this way and were being unduly penalised and asked to do unnecessary extra administrative work. However, David Benyon's action was an indication of the fact that he considered such policies to be of importance.

Before concluding this section I want to mention some of the difficulties which David Benyon felt there were in transferring a policy on Multicultural

and Anti-Racist Education into practice. We have already seen some of the problems and dilemmas which faced him in trying to effect change in school organisation. These factors clearly also influenced the development of practice in Anti-Racism as it was closely related to some of these changes. I have also mentioned that David Benyon felt there had been very little help from outside the school in transferring policy into practice and that there were difficulties in operationalising some of the principles of Anti-Racism.

David Benyon emphasised the significance of time constraints, 'especially,' he said, 'during the year we have just had when it's been very difficult to do anything apart from stop drinking in too much water'. This constraint applied especially to the deputy head whose job it was to monitor the implementation of the policy on Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education. She was also responsible for the pastoral system in the school and for procuring and looking after supply teachers, both very time consuming jobs. Secondly, as David Benyon pointed out, for this deputy head the idea of the school as an agency for doing something about racial inequality was not a real passion. She tended to direct her energies and expertise to practical day-to-day concerns and to adopt a fairly passive approach. The implementation of policy on Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education rarely became a priority for her. This, David Benyon admitted, was also true to some extent of himself, in that with many pressing matters which arose in terms of the day to day running of the school, the review of the school's policy 'is not something which comes to the top of my heap'. Mainly because of this the school had not developed any system to monitor the implementation of policy or to assess its efficacy. Similarly the school had no methods for monitoring the progress or otherwise of ethnic minority students. This was partly because of the hostility of some staff towards the idea of recording information on the ethnic backgrounds (a hostility which partly derived from a realisation of the real practical difficulties that there are in such a process and the sensitivity that it could have for ethnic minority students and their parents), but also simply because the school had not yet got around to discussing the issue.

David Benyon also pointed out that, whilst the majority of staff in the school were not opposed to the idea of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education, there was a feeling of indifference amongst some staff, who would express to him views like, 'What's it got to do with Maths or C.D.T.' or 'Good idea but it's clearly got nothing to do with me'. There was, he pointed out, a lack of

awareness in some areas of what the issue actually meant for practice. This, he thought, perhaps stemmed from the fact that racism was rather remote from the experiences of mainly white middle class staff.

Despite these difficulties he did feel that the school policy had been effective in many ways. There were some staff who were doing a lot and the policy had helped to 'shape their consciousness about what needed to be done'. And as he said:

As far as I can gather the idea of parity of esteem does seem a reality....It's ever so hard to judge, but I do think that on the whole black students feel that they are equal members of the school community and the school cares for them as much as it does for white students....recognising that there are individuals like Stephen Graham (a boy who had recently been suspended) who will explicitly say the opposite....that you're only picking on me because the school's racist....But on the whole black students will say the school is as much for them as for anybody else.

But he emphasised that his assessment of the effectiveness of the school's policy was largely based upon intuition and conceded 'that's not good enough, we ought to be making time to assess our progress at least once a year'.

Conclusion

To summarise, in this section I have tried to show how David Benyon interpreted the notion of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education, how this related to his wider ideas about how the school should be organised, and finally how he attempted to put his interpretations into practice as a head teacher. He was a head committed to Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education. Clearly to him it was not just a matter of tinkering with the content of the curriculum to teach about ethnic minority cultures, it was part of a wider approach to education which might be loosely labelled 'progressive' (see Troyna 1985). It was a whole school reform which had implications for school structure and organisation, teacher/student relations, school/community relations and the curriculum. It meant commitments to equal opportunities in the school, a 'parity of esteem' for black and white students and to teaching about social and political issues of local, national and world importance. It

was also part of his wider commitment to the development of a child-centred pedagogy, a breaking down of traditional subject barriers, a lessening of differentiation within the school, more egalitarian teacher-pupil relationships, and a more consultative style of school management.

David Benyon's commitment to Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education was shown in his practice in several ways. First, he attempted to ensure that the teachers he appointed were not racist and supported the school's policy. It would have been difficult for a teacher who did not express support for the policy to secure a position at the school. Second, he tried to make sure that the appointment procedures at Milltown High were free from racial or cultural bias so that ethnic minority applicants would receive equal opportunities and appointment on merit. In fact he went further here. He examined carefully the requirements for the position that was being filled to make certain that unnecessary and possibly discriminatory requirements were not specified. He had also revised somewhat his notion of 'merit'. He did not accept the traditional notion that seniority, qualifications and experience were necessarily the best indicators of merit. Ideas, enthusiasm, energy and commitment to his sort of educational philosophy counted highly. He took a flexible and adventurous view, and was prepared to take into account that an ethnic minority or a female candidate may have in the past suffered disadvantages which meant that they were less likely to have a high standard of formal qualifications, seniority and experience. He also argued that, all other things being equal, being from an ethnic minority would be a positive attribute for a person seeking appointment to the school.

David Benyon had also made non-racism a clear norm of behaviour in the school. In assemblies and in dealing with the few racist incidents that did occur he strongly communicated his expectations. Judging from my interviews with students and my own observations around the school (see chapter 8) this communication was clearly received by the staff and the majority of students. He also used his position to teach more specifically about race-related issues in assemblies, and had begun to make moves toward involving parents and members of the local community more fully in the development of school policy by initiating a working party on police involvement in the school. However, as I have noted earlier in this chapter, David Benyon's attempt to reform the school, and to situate Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education within a series of wider school reforms, was constrained by a number of factors which

prevented the full realisation of his interpretation of policy. I now want to examine the way other staff in the school perceived Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education and how this affected their practice. This is the subject of the next chapter.

Footnotes

1) Although some staff actually went against their union guidelines and resumed out of school activities at one stage in the dispute.

2) Andy Hargeaves (1978) discusses a more general aspect of this point in terms of the dilemma teachers face between 'egalitarianism' and selection for the occupational order. As he points out 'in contemporary capitalist society the goals of the education system are fundamentally contradictory'.

Chapter Five

Teacher Response to School and L.E.A. Policies on Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education

Introduction

We have seen how Milltown High School developed policies on Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and that David Benyon, the present headteacher, was committed to the development and implementation of these policies. But, as I argued in the last chapter, heads are not all powerful. They need the support and enthusiasm of their staff if they are to succeed in implementing reforms. What therefore were the attitudes of the staff in 1985/86 to Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education? This chapter will examine how these teachers interpreted and responded to both school and L.E.A. policies on this issue. In researching this question I was in sympathy with the view expressed by Ball (1981) that an educational innovation cannot be considered 'as an objective structural entity that can be understood aside from the different meanings and significances it has for the different teachers involved', and that it was therefore important to view it as an 'interaction process' in which the interpretation, definition and action of those involved was the significant object of study. Thus any study of the implementation of educational innovation must centre on the perceptions of practitioners at the chalk face, as clearly they will determine the reality of that innovation. What actually happens in practice will be heavily influenced by their views and concerns.

I was interested therefore in how individual teachers and groups (e.g. subject departments) responded to the basic idea of L.E.A.s and schools formulating policies on Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education, how they interpreted the content of such policies, what Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism actually meant to them, and how these views and perceptions influenced their practice as individual teachers and their departmental and pastoral arrangements. I conducted 32 semi-structured interviews with teachers to explore these questions. I used an interview schedule, but most questions were open-ended and allowed the teachers to respond freely and at length, if they wished, within a basic framework. Most of the interviews were tape-recorded and lasted between ½ hour and 1 hour.

Teachers' general attitudes to policy and policy development

Perhaps a preliminary and unsurprising point to make is that the initial training of the majority of teachers at Milltown High made little reference to issue of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education. Only the more recently trained staff had been given any chance to explore these issues, but even this was usually limited to a couple of lectures or an optional course, which was, as one teacher said, 'soon forgotten'. However, over half the staff I interviewed, said they had attended some form of in-service training (INSET) on Multicultural and/or Anti-Racist Education either in or outside the school. A small number had also been members of either school or L.E.A. working parties on the issue. Several members of the English department and the growing Integrated Curriculum department, and the head of the Science department were most involved. Whilst there had been no specific school-based INSET on this topic since the working party had reported in 1981, every member of staff was given a copy of the staff file at the beginning of each year which contained the school's policy and frequent reference was made by David Benyon to the importance that he attached to the development of whole-school policies. However, as we have already seen, very few of the staff had been involved in the actual process of school policy construction, and they had little influence over L.E.A. policy making.

What then did the teachers think of the idea of school and L.E.A. policy development in Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education? First, all bar one of the teachers I interviewed were aware that the L.E.A. and the school had policy commitments. Most were also aware of the general orientation of these policies in support of Multicultural Education and against racism, and said they were in favour of the principle of L.E.A.s and schools formulating policies. They suggested that L.E.A.s and schools should decide on and state their basic approach. Such policy statements most regarded as legitimate and useful guidelines. Only one teacher spoke of his concern at what he saw as the 'intrusion' of the L.E.A. into areas that should be reserved for 'the professional judgement of teachers'. However, when pressed a number of teachers shared this concern. They would be opposed, they said, to policy statements which rigidly prescribed what should be taught or how it should be taught, or which laid down patterns of school organisation. These matters should be for

teachers in schools to decide. Thus they felt policy statements were best kept as general statements of principles.

More criticism came from several teachers who said they felt that such policies were being given far too high a priority in the L.E.A. and the school. They argued that Milltown High faced more pressing and urgent problems, such as a 'breakdown in school discipline', 'ineffective management', and 'the introduction of things like G.C.S.E., the Alternative Curriculum and the Integrated Curriculum'. They were concerned that the L.E.A. was making policy statements without any real appreciation of the difficult working situation in many schools. One teacher felt that issues of racism were becoming 'over dominant' so that other worrying problems such as 'bullying and extortion rackets amongst the kids' were, by implication, becoming more acceptable. Another was cynical about what he called 'the bandwagon effect', where teachers became involved with discussion and implementation of policies in order to enhance their own careers rather than from a 'real' commitment or the clear identification of a problem to be solved. His view was that policy development was largely a 'public relations exercise' designed to present an appropriate public image, rather than encourage real change. Another argued that schools were being expected to solve problems (i.e. racism and racial inequality) which originated in the social structure of British society and which were beyond the power of schools to deal with (1).

Many of the teachers, however, admitted that they were unsure of the actual content of the statements or specific policy prescriptions. Several staff confessed that the staff file that they were given at the beginning of each academic year remained unopened and they therefore had not read the school's policy document. Others complained that the policy pronouncements were too vague and ill-defined and what was needed was more precise guidance from the L.E.A. and senior school staff about what they should actually be doing to implement the policy, a point which appeared to contradict their opposition to L.E.A. prescription. It was, however, an indication of the confusion that surrounded the issue of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education as a whole-school reform. Some of the more committed teachers were concerned about the lack of time and thought given by the L.E.A. to the problems of implementation, arguing that unless more in-service training and time for discussion were given the policies would remain largely 'tokens' and ignored by most staff.

When I asked whether departments or pastoral units had met together to formally discuss the L.E.A. or school policy I discovered that none had. Several staff explained that the head (neither David Benyon or his predecessor) had not asked them to meet formally to discuss the matter and had not asked departments to submit any response to the policies or report of their attempts at implementation. Two heads of department - Craft and Business Studies - explained that they felt the issue of Multicultural and Anti-Racist education had absolutely nothing to do with their subject area. Others, such as Maths, Languages, Home Economics, Humanities, P.E. and Art had discussed the issue briefly and informally with the teachers in their departments and decided the policies merely affirmed their present practice or contained few implications for any modification. The heads of the English, Drama, the newly formed Integrated Curriculum and to some extent Science argued that it was unnecessary to have formal meetings on this particular issue as it was considered almost every day on an informal basis. Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism they suggested had become part of the normal, established way of working in their departments, part of their subject subcultures. So whilst there had been no formal meetings to discuss the implications of the L.E.A. and school policy there was some, and in some departments considerable, informal discussion.

The meaning of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education?

Let us examine the teachers' views and interpretations in more detail. I asked in the interviews what a) Multicultural, and b) Anti-Racist Education meant to them, and whether they were in favour of such approaches. Only one teacher claimed to be against. A Craft teacher, his view was very much in the assimilationist mold. He explained that he was in sympathy with Ray Honeyford, and was opposed to ethnic minority groups 'dictating what should be taught in schools':

I think it's wrong....I mean they've basically come to this country and should abide by the rules and regulations of this country. I think it's wrong that they should come in and say, 'Right I'm here and you must adapt to my culture'. The onus should be on ethnic minorities to adjust to the British way of life. I can appreciate the problems they have got, but they

opted to come here....I think they should bend their ways...I think a lot of them are using it as an excuse. Certainly the West Indians.

He was unsure about the notion of Multicultural Education, and appeared to take it to mean education in a different culture:

I would be most upset if my daughter went to school and she was being taught a different culture, because in that set up there would be a lot of cultures in that particular class. I would be most upset if the timetable revolved around that different culture.

Whilst he conceded that schools ought to teach something to show the 'different cultures around the world', he felt that basically should be orientated to teaching 'the European way of life'. 'After all,' he explained, 'they are Europeans in a European society. I think they should adapt to the European way of life'.

He was indifferent to the idea of Anti-Racist Education because he didn't regard himself as racist, he felt 'racial prejudice' was declining 'as the generations get used to each other' and 'the kids don't bother much either'. Moreover:

I can't see teaching about race relations having a great deal of effect...There are a lot more important things to me that are being brushed aside and minor things brought in its place...Things like discipline and the way you behave with each other....When your discipline drops down you've no respect for property or people. I think this is the major thing in this school, the breakdown in discipline, things like school uniform and smartness, being brought up in an environment of working, which is sadly lacking at the moment...because there are people bringing these sorts of policies in and they're tagging more importance into these policies than they're doing on other things. Unless you get discipline in a school you're never going to get anything.

Whilst several teachers were in sympathy with this last view, most of the staff I interviewed were more supportive of a liberal notion of Multicultural Education. The vast majority argued that British society was 'multicultural' and

the school should reflect this fact. They regarded Multicultural Education as teaching about a variety of 'cultures', especially those that made up the school's catchment area, and attempting to promote an awareness of and positive attitudes to cultural differences. They maintained that it was important that the school take account of and be sensitive towards the ethnic backgrounds of the students. The aims of such an education were the promotion of 'tolerance', 'respect' and 'a harmonious society'. The following comments were typical of these views:

It's all about respect, about understanding and acceptance of other peoples' culture...and that's sort of communication, how you treat each other...about how you go through life with a bit of quality and understanding. (Art teacher)

I think the aim is to encourage greater tolerance of other cultures, to encourage positive attitudes to whatever culture. (Languages teacher)

For me Multicultural Education should be nation-wide. It should involve studying all cultures and learning about all races...To achieve understanding between groups, and between nations. (Science teacher)

You have to meet the needs of the pupils you have got and if they come from a variety of cultural backgrounds then you must take on board as much information as you can get from your students and help them acquire the confidence to achieve in their learning environment and if that means you have to do a certain amount of research and finding out what things you don't know about their cultural background then that's your responsibility as a teacher. (Learning Support teacher)

It means being aware of peoples' different cultural backgrounds and reflecting that in your curriculum. (Maths teacher)

It's all about understanding, tolerance, understanding other peoples' viewpoints and feelings...It helps us run a more harmonious, more peaceful school. I think from a selfish point of view you think of the school first and hopefully, this will rub off outside. Sadly though not a lot of it does.

I think what we are trying to do is create a harmonious atmosphere.

(Deputy head)

To most of these teachers Anti-Racist Education represented merely a more direct and forceful method of achieving the same ends. It was part of what they saw as their professional responsibility to behave in a respectful, non-racist way towards their students, and to appreciate and not denigrate their cultural backgrounds, so that students from different ethnic groups enjoyed equal opportunities within the school. It was also part of their moral responsibility to educate against and challenge racist attitudes amongst the students when they could. Again the following views are typical:

Anti-Racist Education is more dealing with attitudes around the school. Like when the kids say things to each other...It's building up the right attitudes in the kids and respecting each other, just having equal respect for people with different cultures. (Domestic Science teacher)

Anti-Racism is more to do with peoples' attitudes and the way they relate to each other...It's a matter of showing respect in the way you as a teacher relate to kids of different cultural backgrounds and trying to encourage kids to do the same in their relationships with each other. (Science teacher)

I think Anti-Racist Education is basically the same (as Multicultural Education). Racism goes on between all nationalities, all races. There's always one group of people jealous of another and that's what I find wrong. It's not just a question of whites persecuting blacks. I think it's also wrong that black people persecute each other or white people. That's racist. I would like to work to combat that. To promote harmony between all people and nations. (Science teacher)

It's all about respect. Allowing us to get on with the job of education without all these extraneous nasties coming in to it. (Art teacher)

A minority of teachers, mainly in the English and Integrated Curriculum departments, but including the Head of the Science department, had taken their

analysis a stage further. Whilst accepting many of the fundamental principles of Multicultural Education - respect for and valuing of student cultures, education about different cultures, the promotion of tolerance and respect in social relationships - they distanced themselves from what they saw as 'the steel bands, saris, and samosas' approach, which 'smacks of tokenism' (Integrated Curriculum teacher) and 'reeks of people being patronising and doing good' (Learning Support teacher). They argued that Anti-Racist Education was something more:

We need to say to ourselves what are our aims through Multicultural Education. Is it just to let people know of other cultures and then so what. What about if they know and they still behave and act in an oppressive way, then what do you actually do with that...With Anti-Racist Education we need to consider the fact that we are a racist society and actually begin to say that in a classroom context. Rather than to say let's get to know each other better. I obviously appreciate that getting to know different cultures is of paramount importance, but if it doesn't actually lead anywhere....You're not actually challenging the racism. Now that's very difficult to do, but you begin by saying we are racist and you move on from that statement. (Integrated Curriculum teacher)

Anti-Racist Education is making them aware of the racist attitudes that they have and society has, and the way society is actually geared and how it works, and hopefully they'll learn that things are not quite how they seem. (Drama teacher)

I think Anti-Racism is basically a political movement which I endorse. It should raise questions about power and wealth, and how they are distributed, not just about race...But I do think that schools have to take up the Anti-Racist thing a bit sharper...It seems that societies that are racist are particularly evil, and societies do have a tendency to drift towards that much more often than you would think. (Science teacher)

Although often their ideas were undeveloped, for these teachers, as we shall see in the next chapter on the English department, Anti-Racism meant more a form of consciousness raising, a form of political education, through

which students could come to a greater understanding of the social and political world and how it was organised and structured.

Combatting Racism in Education?

L.E.A. and school policies on Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education are, to some extent, premised on the view that teachers or school practices are, or could be, racist, and that if teachers recognise this they can alter their behaviour or practices to eliminate racism. However, as I have pointed out, the definition of the term 'racism' and the increasingly used 'institutionalised racism' are often unclear. How did the teachers at Milltown High respond to such ideas? Did their interpretations of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education acknowledge these aspects of policy? Did they recognise racism in the education system? If so what form did they think that it took and what did they do about it?

In order to discover their views on these aspects of Anti-Racism I asked the teachers three additional specific questions. First, to what extent did they feel that there was racism in the education system in Britain, and how did this relate to individual schools and individual teachers? Second, were there any practices and procedures a) in schools generally, and b) at Milltown High which they felt disadvantaged students from ethnic minority groups? And, third, how did their views on these questions influence their practice?

Interestingly very few teachers made any reference in their replies to school or L.E.A. policies. These statements did not appear to be used for guidance or reference in this respect. Most relied on their own personal ideas and opinions. A number of teachers, perhaps understandably, professed confusion over the definition of 'racism'. 'Does it mean teachers' attitudes to black kids, or expectations, or whole systems that work against black kids or what?' said one. Several complained about what they thought was the confusing use of terms like 'institutionalised racism', which one teacher suggested was 'an interesting little jargon phrase' which 'can mean all things to all people'.

Having said this, most of the teachers agreed that there were aspects of the educational system that operated to the disadvantage of ethnic minority students and therefore could be described as racist. One teacher believed that the unequal outcomes of the educational system were a self-evident indication of this fact:

Of course the educational system is racist. White kids succeed and black kids don't, more white kids go on to University, more white kids do A levels. If black kids are failing, and I don't believe in any genetic difference, they're failing because of society and the education system and everything combined. (English teacher)

Even though she conceded that part of the explanation for this 'failure' lay outside the educational system itself, she believed that unless positive action was taken to rectify the imbalance, then the education system was guilty of neglect:

If children arrive with an inability to read and write because of social factors, we shouldn't ignore it, we should put money into remedial departments and we should give them compensatory education where they do learn to read and write. If black kids are failing then we should actually be doing the compensatory work to make sure they pass.

Some felt that it was almost inevitable given the 'racist' nature of British society that the education system should reflect this fact. They argued that the way society and the educational system was organised resulted in ethnic minority students receiving worse opportunities than their white counterparts:

I just think the whole experience of people who live in this country is affected by racism, and therefore right from the facilities they're offered, the places in which they live and work, whether they have jobs or not, where they go to school...all the things that happen to them throughout their life are affected by racism, and by the structure of power in this country, so that education has to come under the same umbrella.

(Integrated Curriculum teacher)

However, they found it difficult to specify exactly how individual schools and teachers were implicated:

I don't really know. I do find it difficult to separate out all these things. It's all bound up with social class and how much money your

parents have got and where you live. It's very complicated. I don't know if you can bring it down to individual schools and individual teachers.

(English teacher)

Others, however, attempted to be more specific. By far the most common indication of racism in schools that was mentioned (it was mentioned by 20 of the teachers I interviewed) was the bias that occurred in curriculum content and teaching materials. The curriculum of many schools, they felt, still did not reflect the fact that Britain was a multi-ethnic society. This meant that in multi-ethnic schools ethnic minority students were disadvantaged because 'the curriculum does not relate to their backgrounds and recognise the validity of their cultures' (Science teacher), and in all-white schools nothing was done to familiarise students with ethnic minority cultural forms and therefore to 'change attitudes'. Several teachers broadened this view, and explained that they felt that often ethnic minority cultures were ignored or deprecated by the 'normal' working of schools. An English teacher was one:

Yes there is racism in the education system, because that's our culture, it's racist, our white culture is racist and schools are a part of it....I don't think Milltown High is, but the majority of schools are, and Milltown High was...You used to have black girls with beads in their hair put out of lessons, and everything was negative, they were told that they must not talk in 'pidgin' English and things like that.

About a third of the teachers I interviewed argued that there could be teachers in schools who held racist views and that this would inevitably influence their work with ethnic minority students. Two teachers described other multi-ethnic schools that they had worked in where a minority of teachers voiced derogatory views about ethnic minorities and had stereotyped ideas about such students. A Humanities teacher said:

There were some teachers at (his previous school) who were openly racist in the staffroom, and I can't see how those teachers could have developed the same sort of relationships with the black students that they taught as they did with the white. They must have treated them less sympathetically.

A small number of staff believed that all white teachers were inevitably racist as a result of their 'mono-cultural' upbringing and education. They argued that teachers could be 'unconsciously racist', perhaps thereby inadvertently favouring or forming closer relationships with white students. One of the Languages teachers explained:

I suppose the majority of teachers are white and middle class and so perhaps inevitably they are going to be racist to some extent. I mean we are all victims of our upbringing and we all receive racist images from the media, however unconsciously and I think it affects us all.

In identifying racism in the educational system a few teachers went further than curriculum bias and teachers' attitudes. An English teacher suggested that institutions that were dominated and run by white people, as most schools are, in a society which was multi-ethnic, was in itself racist, as ethnic minority people were denied access to power over important decisions which affected the lives of their children, and students were deprived of ethnic minority role models. A Humanities teacher developed a similar line of argument pointing out that the decisions and assessments that were made in education were largely based on 'white, middle class values' which he thought might disadvantage ethnic minority students. He espoused a view similar to that of Bourdieu (1974) who suggested that teachers make judgements on the basis of a 'class ethnocentrism' thereby disadvantaging students from lower socio-economic groups who lacked the appropriate 'cultural capital'. A Science teacher argued that Afro/Caribbean students were often less conformist than white and that this influenced the decisions teachers made about them. In a subtle way teachers were forced unconsciously into decisions that could be racist because they were in the position of assessing students and student behaviour was one criteria that was used. This teacher was the only one to mention the possibility of such inadvertent discrimination. Another teacher, a head of school/year, saw the system as a whole disadvantaging ethnic minority youngsters as he felt they received inferior educational provision by the very fact that the inner city schools they attended were less effective.

Thus many of the teachers at Milltown High recognised the possibility of racism in some form in the educational system. But there was a diversity of view on the form that it took and therefore on what was to be changed or

combatted and how, under the auspices of Anti-Racism. Most identified bias in curriculum content and individual prejudice and discrimination, conscious and unconscious, as areas of concern. Others went further and had begun to think about how various deep-rooted institutional structures and practices might disadvantage ethnic minority students. How did they feel such ideas applied to Milltown High School? Did they think any of these racist practices were present in the school and if so what did they do about it?

The majority of teachers that I talked to felt that the more obvious forms of racism, such as in curriculum content and staff attitudes, had been eliminated at Milltown High. Whilst some suggested that the school's engagement with policies on Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education had contributed to such a process by 'increasing awareness', others said that these ideas were fundamental to their central values as teachers anyway. Anti-Racism was, in fact, synonymous with good professional practice which hinged around the values of individualism and universalism, and involved treating students as individuals, avoiding racial or ethnic stereotyping, non-discrimination and assessing students on 'merit'. A Maths teacher summarised this point of view:

I don't think anyone here goes around making racist remarks or using racist stereotypes. I don't think many teachers would. You wouldn't be much of a teacher if you operated on that sort of basis. So I mean being Anti-Racist to me is really doing what I think teachers anyway should do and that's treating every student, as far as possible, as an individual and not letting colour come into it. So when I make judgements about kids I don't think about the colour of their skin, I think about how good they are at Maths, how hard they work, and how well they behave.

Anti-Racism in this sense did not involve any radical change in their practice, but involved guarding against the possibility of racism.

However, there was some disagreement here amongst staff who claimed to adopt a policy of 'treating all students the same' and those who regarded such a statement as bordering on heresy. The former group emphasised a non-racist, 'colour blind' approach in which common standards applied to all and race and culture were regarded as irrelevant in teacher/student relationships. The latter group suggested that teachers should be aware of individual and cultural

differences and should treat students accordingly. They believed positive efforts ought to be made to value the cultures of ethnic minority students. On further probing it appeared that the two views had much common ground. Both aimed for a sensitive handling of teacher/student relationships based upon non-racist expectations and standards. Often those who advocated the latter view taught in curriculum areas, such as English and Humanities, where positive efforts could be fairly easily be made to incorporate ethnic minority perspectives into their work. Those who put forward the former view generally taught subjects like Maths, Science and Craft where it was less easy to do so. The disagreement did, however, engender some confusion. As one of the Maths teacher explained:

Upto a year ago I've said, 'I don't notice the difference' (between students from different ethnic backgrounds), 'they're all the same to me', but I read a very damning comment in the report that the school produced when Michael James was here. It actually said that what we're trying to move away from was exactly this comment where staff say they treat them all the same, and I thought, 'Oh god, that's me. I say exactly that', and yet it didn't go any further and explain why it was wrong to actually feel like that, because if you ask me to sum it up in a sentence, that's the way I feel about it. I don't particularly go into the classroom thinking I've got some black kids here or some white kids, I must teach in a particular way. I mean I really do go in and just teach Maths. I love my subject and I've got good kids and horrible kids, and I tend to look at it from that point of view, kids I like and kids I don't like....You see I work both ways I teach them all the same way, but I treat them all individually. How do you explain that? (Maths Teacher)

The essential point, that nearly all the teachers I spoke to made, was that they tried to treat all students as 'individuals', as much as was possible within the constraints of the school system, and in their relationships with students to adopt a 'racially inexplicit' approach (Kirp 1979). The following comments were typical:

I find I don't particularly think about whether the kids are black or white. You think about their characters as individuals and it's their

personalities. I'm not really aware of their blackness or whiteness. (P.E. teacher)

I don't actually sit in front of a class and think well there are 40% black, 10% brown, and whatever percentage white, you teach the kids as kids...kids are kids whatever the colour of their skin. (School/Year Head)

For many teachers this non-racist practice was implicit in their belief in 'fairness' and treating students 'equally'. A minority believed that it was necessary in a society where racism was common to more specifically guard against its influence. An admission of their own racism was, they argued, important in order to consciously work against it and combat its effect in their interactions with students. Two of these teachers described how they attempted to avoid such influences in their own practice:

I don't let it affect my relationship with the kids. At least I don't think I do. I know that I make a great effort to be exceedingly fair, and give everyone an equal opportunity in class, and I am very careful what I say. I don't make any racist comments and I always pick them up from kids. I always discuss them immediately they're made. I regard that as just professionalism. (Languages teacher)

I do think that one thing that having a policy on racism has achieved is to make teachers like myself a little more aware of the possibility that they might be racist in the way that they treat students without even realising it. I often think about classes that I teach and think about if I am treating children fairly. I mean do I give more attention to one group than another or do I tell one lot of kids off more than another, and is it related to whether they're black or white? I make a conscious effort to be fair. (Community teacher)

Several others talked about the importance of being 'self-aware of being racist' and 'checking it'.

Some teachers, as we have seen, had a broader conception of racism which included wider school structures and practices rather than just interpersonal relationships with students. How did they apply these ideas to Milltown High?

To the English teacher mentioned above even though staff, she claimed, had eliminated 'overt racism':

We are still racist in the subtle way of being a white institution with white attitudes and white values and white bias. We're not discriminating against black kids because we see them as inferior or because we don't want them to succeed...But we're an institution run by white people for black people and therefore we're imposing white ideas on black people and not involving those black people in the decisions. Black people are still in very small numbers at the professional level, but in large numbers on the cleaning staff. That kind of racism I am sure must be damaging to a kid's self-esteem because they haven't got sufficient role models. In that sense Milltown High is racist.

These forms of racism, she argued, were more difficult to combat, and this involved long-term action on staff appointments and a broadening of school decision-making. The practicality of this latter reform she viewed with some scepticism. The Humanities teacher mentioned above thought that he and his colleagues might inevitably be racist because in their everyday practice:

You don't question whether the language that you use or the way that you teach people or the morality you are trying to impose is based on white, middle class Protestantism, and you don't question whether, in fact, somebody else's behaviour is perfectly legitimate within their cultural setting, and when you're telling a kid off you don't actually question whether they're behaving in a way that their community, their group, the people they live with or whatever expect of them. You just tell them off if they're not doing it the way you want, and you don't question whether that's racist or not....I mean I'm not sure whether that's racist or what you could do if you decided it was.

Similarly the Science teacher argued that at Milltown High:

Part of the problem is that black kids are challenging authority much more, because authority is being much nastier to them, and it's me they're challenging and I consciously or otherwise am responding to those

challenges by being sometimes more aggressive, sometimes more authoritarian. So I'm being more authoritarian, and aggressive to black kids. So I am functioning as a racist in a sense that I am treating them in a way differently, and when I weigh up where the kids are going to go into this class or that class in the 4th or 5th year, if I think they're going to be argumentative and unco-operative and unwilling I just think well there's no point in them going into the top group, because they're just not going to get on with the work in there.

The head of school/year mentioned above felt that at Milltown High:

We don't offer the kind of education that the kids are entitled to here. Because of the position of the school, because of the very nature of the school and the pressures within the school, people (i.e. teachers) find it very difficult to cope day-in day-out, 5 days a week, 40 weeks of the year. So the staff attendance is less than good and in that respect the kids are not getting the kind of education that I would expect my own children to get and in fact my own children do get. Now in that respect the education system is racist in that it is offering a less than adequate education to a large proportion of the black population in Milltown. By the very nature of where they live and the fact that they go to a community school and all the problems within that school. I'm not necessarily blaming anyone, but that in reality is how it works out.

These teachers recognised some of the more subtle ways in which the educational system and school processes might disadvantage ethnic minority students. But they were uncertain of the implications of these processes for their practice as teachers. Whilst they could ensure that as individuals they treated students fairly, irrespective of their race or ethnic background, these aspects of racism were largely seen as lying in the broader workings of society and the educational system and therefore beyond their control.

The large majority of teachers at Milltown High thus regarded themselves as Anti-Racist in the sense that they recognised some of the possible manifestations of racism and strove to be non-racist in their practice. Some had clearly taken their analysis further than others, but those who had done

this found it difficult to see how they as individuals could practically combat the subtle forms of racism they identified.

However, a small number of the teachers felt that the existence of racism in the educational system was much exaggerated and were resentful at the implication contained in policy statements that they or their practices were racist, or might be, and in need of review and change. They viewed the L.E.A. and school policies with some cynicism and hostility as a result. Most maintained that curriculum biases had been eliminated a long time ago and they were sceptical about the actual existence of racist attitudes, conscious or unconscious, amongst teachers. Several said that they had not met any teachers during their teaching careers who held derogatory or stereotyped views of ethnic minority students, or if they had it was the odd, rather unusual, character. They certainly did not accept the view that racist attitudes were common amongst the teaching profession and questioned the idea that 'hidden' or 'unconscious racism' was a significant factor in their relationships with black students. They also found it difficult to see how, in the absence of racist attitudes, any of the normal workings of the school might operate to the disadvantage of ethnic minority students. They were sceptical of policies which they saw as premised on the existence of racism in school practices, but which failed to specify the nature of that racism. They regarded formal policy statements as largely a waste of time and paper. The following quotations illustrate the views of these teachers:

Anti-Racism suggests an aggressive combatting of racism or so-called racism. But I'm not aware that anyone's going around actually...as far as I know in education, making racist comments or racist remarks or teaching subjects in a racist way. So I mean Anti-Racism doesn't mean anything, unless someone can actually say well we're combatting propaganda that's been taught in History or whatever. It doesn't really have a meaning for me, other than have some uncomfortable tones of aggression which sends my back up a bit actually, when you start talking about Anti-Racism in a context where there is no proven evidence of racism in the first place. I think its making certain assumptions that there is hidden or unconscious racism...I'm not comfortable with people assuming that you or I have got hidden racist views. (Business Studies teacher)

I recognise that certain things that I as a kid was taught would be unacceptable in a multiracial society, which I wasn't brought up in, but those things so far as I can see have been got rid of some time ago...but I can see nothing at all in this school that discriminates against kids from different racial groups. I certainly don't and I don't think other teachers do. So in a sense if the school isn't racist then having an Anti-Racist policy is pretty meaningless. (Science teacher)

These teachers felt that far too much was made of racism in schools on the basis of very little evidence, they believed practices and procedures at Milltown High to be non-racist and therefore saw little point in reviewing or changing them.

There appears to have been a certain amount of disagreement and confusion amongst teachers at Milltown High on this aspect of policies on Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education. Whilst nearly all believed that schools ought to prepare students for life in a multicultural society and to educate against racism, there were different views about the idea of racism in the educational system and individual schools, and therefore about what Anti-Racism was meant to combat or stand for. This is perhaps unsurprising given the complexity of this issue and the ill-defined nature of policy statements which gave teachers little guidance in identifying or specifying the nature of the racism in education.

The practice of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education

Most of the staff at Milltown High were supportive of L.E.A. and school policies as they saw them. In fact most argued that the policies merely affirmed their normal, non-racist, professional practice and did not perceive them as advocating or prescribing any radical change. What then did the staff at Milltown High feel they did which represented a 'Multicultural' or 'Anti-Racist' approach? The next two chapters, which consist of case studies of the English and the Humanities departments, will address this question, more fully. I will confine myself here to a more general account of how teachers said they operationalised the principles of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education.

I asked teachers 'What do you do in practice which represents Multicultural or Anti-Racist Education?'. As we have seen most teachers maintained that they operated in a non-racist way, but in reply to this question most viewed the practice of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education as essentially something to do with the formal curriculum. They therefore felt it was mainly of relevance to those departments that dealt with 'knowledge of cultures and societies' and 'attitudes'. Replies thus varied mainly according to subject department.

Teachers in the Maths, C.D.T., and Business Studies/Typing departments said that they did very little that could be construed as 'Multicultural or Anti-Racist' beyond checking the text books and materials they used were free from any racist content. They argued that because their subjects were essentially concerned with 'culture-free' skills and concepts then there was little they could do to contribute to Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education. Their conceptions of their subjects ruled out 'teaching about other cultures' or 'debating social issues'. However, the head of the Maths department did describe, laughing, how he sometimes taught about Islamic tessellations, and, more seriously, a project he was doing with one group of students which involved using a computer data base containing statistical information on inequality between the developed and developing world. 'Depending on your definition,' he said, 'you could say I'm doing Anti-Racist Maths, but I must admit that I'm interested in the statistics and the Mathematical skills that are coming out of it primarily.'

The majority of the teachers in the Science department also said they did little in practice that represented Multicultural or Anti-Racist Education, beyond 'colouring in faces on worksheets black', for broadly similar reasons. One Science teacher explained:

I don't think it (Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education) is particularly relevant to Science. Science to me is about doing things, experimenting and learning first hand...and it doesn't really matter about the past and about cultures. Most Science is nothing to do with cultures.

But the head of Science was very interested in the whole area. He explained how he had hoped to develop the science curriculum around the study of social and historical themes with the emphasis on the view that science is 'non-elitist', and:

The wealth is created by lots of ordinary people, and lots of good ideas come from ordinary people...and the elitist idea of Science, that all the major discoveries were made by one or two individuals, almost always white, European men is wrong. Part of what we're saying to kids is Science is something everybody does...You can do it as well as anybody else.

He was thus attempting to modify the 'subject paradigm' (Ball and Lacey 1980) of Science toward an approach which concentrated on the social aspects of the subject.

He had made a start and had written a third year, half-term course unit which was called 'The Seeds of History', and he hoped provided teaching materials which were 'non-elitist, multi-cultural, anti-racist, anti-sexist and environmentally conscious'. It consisted of a series of lessons and experiments based on some of the major scientific discoveries - farming, pottery and metal smelting - which it is suggested probably were made by ordinary people in what we now call the Third World. But there were constraints on introducing such an approach:

The kids need to do some straight Chemistry so that when they do Chemistry in the 4th and 5th year at exam level they know what it is, and

also Graham wants to do things in Biology, and Health education is important. So I've had to compromise.

Furthermore:

I don't think we should turn the Science lesson into another version of Humanities...What I think makes education more interesting is that the kids do different things in different lessons, and they do enjoy doing practicals. If you've got a good practical experiment that works really well, is fairly striking and comes up with a rational, sensible answer, that's good, it's good education, the kids enjoy doing it, they're committed to doing it, it's a lively way of learning. A lot of the Anti-Racist stuff, about food and resources and things about development and so on, it's interesting, but there's almost no practical science. And you may be chucking out a really good experiment to have a discussion or something...I don't know, 75% of the timetable may be stuff like that, and more is probably not a very good idea...If the kids don't find it interesting you're wasting your time.

In practice, then, the response of the Science teachers to Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education remained limited.

The head of the Art department was also sceptical of such approaches in his subject. Hargreaves (1983) has observed that most Art teachers concentrate on the practical teaching of skills and visual awareness, rather than transmitting knowledge about the history of art or its relationship with 'culture'. This was very much the view of the Art teachers at Milltown High. The head of Art explained that he had not got the time or resources to teach the history of Art or comparative Art, and anyway he did not really see Art education in those terms. He believed Art should be taught as 'a way of looking' and as 'the development of skills'. He distanced himself from Art teachers 'who would prefer culture to be the starting point in the classroom':

All they are simply tending to do is copy different cultures Art work. So they'll have a Chinese project, and they'll all do very precise wave forms and very symbolic sort of Art work, or they'll have brightly coloured work. And what tends to happen in my view is that they just regurgitate

history....I feel the way that I teach it helps towards a more child-centred approach and it is far more them discovering about looking, and if their discovering through looking takes them into their own culture then bring that into the classroom as a starting point, great...I just don't have the experience or the belief that getting African or Indian artefacts into the classroom, going round the Indian exhibitions and working from that side is the right way to treat the subject.

The Home Economics teachers also pointed to the difficulties of integrating Multicultural and Anti-Racist approaches into their established subject paradigm. Their approach was more orientated to the development of practical skills, hygiene, and notions of 'healthy eating'. They explained that many of the students, they found, preferred to cook 'westernised' food in school, and, despite the fact that their subject inspector had encouraged them to introduce 'more than token gestures', they found this difficult to do:

From the 1st to the 3rd year we do very little (Multicultural or Anti-Racist Education). We have done what the inspector told us not to do, because we've found the kids don't like doing it really. They won't cook Indian dishes to take home. We did a big 'dem' early this year of Indian dishes with the 5th year, but they weren't very impressed. The girls were a bit more adventurous than the lads. But in the theory work we don't do very much at all, because the theory work is more food science and things like that and I don't see how it could be involved. You could use it when we do the home and you could talk about how people live in different countries, but it's a waste of time, well it's not a waste of time for them, but for the exam at the end it is because it's not on the syllabus. (Home Economics teacher)

The Modern Language teachers argued that teaching a language was in itself Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education because it involved teaching about another culture. The head of department explained:

I think in Languages we do quite a lot to encourage positive attitudes, by the mere fact that if you teach a language you can't divorce that from culture and you try to teach a tolerance of that culture.

But, when I asked whether they taught about the multicultural nature of Spanish society (Spanish was the main language taught) or about Spanish history and society, he replied:

Frankly I don't think that's our job. I think that's the Humanities department. I think touching on the culture is a minor part of teaching a language...I wouldn't dream of having a French Studies or Spanish Studies course like they do in a lot of schools, because we're linguists and we're trained to teach languages. I think we'd be detracting from the work of the Humanities department as well... I want to teach the kids a language....Another problem is always what's dictated by the syllabus in the 4th and 5th year. We don't get through the course as it is.

Here again we have the view that Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education is really a matter for 'the Humanities teachers'.

Essentially what all these teachers were saying was that Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education, as they defined it, was inappropriate to their subject sub-cultures. Their main concerns as teachers, their subject paradigms and pedagogies (Ball and Lacey 1980) lay elsewhere, in the development of skills and knowledge which they saw as mainly unconnected with issues of culture, ethnicity, race relations or racial inequality. These topics were the domain of other subject specialists. They were teachers of Maths or Science or Art or Languages, not, as one teacher put it, of 'sociology'. They did not reject the notion of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education per se. As we have seen, the majority of staff supported such approaches. But in their own practice they felt there was little that they could do. This parallels the findings of Troyna and Ball (1985) that 'Arts' teachers i.e. teachers of English, History, Social Studies, Humanities, were more likely than Science or Creative Arts teachers to integrate Multicultural Education into their work.

What then of the teachers in these subject areas? As we shall see in the next chapter notions of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education were heavily integrated into the work of the English department. They regarded themselves to some extent as 'pioneers' in this area. They believed that an Anti-Racist approach influenced the way they related to students and they tried to adopt a 'child-centred' approach to pedagogy, based around discussion and creative writing. They deliberately selected a literature curriculum which they felt

reflected the backgrounds and concerns of their students and which would raise controversial political and social issues for consideration. In the following chapter I shall describe some of the work of the Humanities teachers, who, whilst less influenced by the idea of Anti-Racist Education, taught a curriculum which they felt represented a Multicultural approach in that it reflected the backgrounds and histories of the students who attended Milltown High and drew its content from a variety of different world societies.

The teachers in the newly founded Integrated Curriculum department also claimed to have taken on board Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education. 'I think it runs through our whole approach, our choice of topics, our choice of books. It's at the back of our minds in everything that we do', said one of the teachers. They advocated a similar 'child-centred' approach to pedagogy to the English teachers, and the principle that all students should be considered of 'equal worth' and be given 'equal opportunities'. They described to me how in planning their new curriculum they deliberately sought out materials which would reflect the backgrounds and interests of the students and rejected those they felt had racist connotations or images associated with them. They had decided to use the 'World Studies 8-13' course (Fisher and Hicks 1985), a Humanities curriculum development project sponsored by the School's Council and the Rowntree Trust. This project attempts to 'promote the knowledge, attitudes and skills that are relevant to living responsibly in a multicultural and interdependent world' (Fisher and Hicks 1985) and encourages the study of different cultures and societies and major issues such as 'peace and conflict, development, human rights and the environment', through the use of 'active teaching methods'. In the second year of the Integrated Curriculum they were planning to adopt Jerome Bruner's *Man: A Course of Study* (MACOS 1968) which adopted a similar approach to the study of cultures and societies. They described how they had developed multicultural work on the topic of 'Festivals' in the first year of the course, which involved the students studying this idea from the point of view of several ethnic minority groups, and how they were working to increase students' awareness of apartheid in South Africa during the Local Authority's Anti-Apartheid week. They hoped to be able to slowly increase the political knowledge and awareness of their young students (only 1st years at the time) by discussing with them current events and relating these to their own experiences.

The teacher of Drama also regarded Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism as central to her work. She felt that Drama was 'one of the easiest ways of dealing with issues and problems and things about relationships'. She explained that usually she developed students' work from issues that arose or that concerned them, and that quite often this involved dealing with issues of race relations and racism. She generally employed 'improvisation' techniques, and used the plays that students constructed to lead discussions about social situations and questions of controversy. Sometimes she would deliberately set up a role play exercise or a simulation in order to explore a particular issue, racism being one. For example, she described how she would ask students to role play a situation based around a mixed race boy/girl relationship, and how she set up a simulation based on a mixed race housing estate.

Several teachers argued that Multicultural and Anti-Racist teaching ought to be part of the school's Social Education Course. Students from the 2nd to the 5th year had one lesson each week of Social Education. However, the course was extremely disorganised, had no head of department and was taught by a relatively large number of teachers from diverse subject areas who often integrated the work into their normal subject teaching. When I asked the teachers who taught on the course whether they did any Multicultural and Anti-Racist work the answer from all was no. One who mainly taught the careers unit explained that there were so many other things to do that he did not have the time, another said that he liked to talk about issues that the students raised and that so far they hadn't brought up the issue of race, and another that he felt that 'the Anti-Racist thing can be a bit overdone':

It's (the issue of race) not something that the kids are over conscious of. They've become more so since assemblies have become more political. They've had their awareness of South Africa heightened, which is a good thing...But there was a reaction in the months after David Benyon arrived. He was talking about this a lot and the kids were almost reacting adversely to this. They'd had enough of it. They wanted to get on with living normally without being constantly reminded that they were black and they were underprivileged. (Head of school/year/Social Education teacher)

He also felt that too much teaching about racism could exaggerate students awareness of the issue causing them to see differences and conflicts in their

relationships with white peers and teachers where none existed before, a point which was put to me by several teachers who felt too much attention was paid at Milltown High to the issue of race. In fact this teacher believed that the best form of Anti-Racist Education occurred naturally through the fairly harmonious informal relationships which students of different ethnic groups enjoyed from day to day in a multi-ethnic school. If problems occurred then teachers should obviously intervene in a 'counselling role', but:

I don't think teaching about it (race relations) necessarily has much effect. I think living it rather than teaching it has a far better and a more long-lasting effect. If you can rub shoulders with kids from other ethnic minorities then you're far more likely to think of that particular child in the future as you knew them as you were growing up...and I think that will have a far bigger influence on you, than some teacher sitting and chatting about it or whatever.

So, in fact, there was no specific Multicultural or Anti-Racist work in the Social Education course.

This then was how the teachers responded in curriculum terms to the idea of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education (2). Whilst such initiatives were largely regarded as irrelevant by teachers in departments like Maths, C.D.T., and Science, they were more fully incorporated into areas like English and Integrated Curriculum. How did they respond to the suggestion that Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education involved implications for broader aspects of their practice?

Most teachers, as I have already pointed out, believed that in their relationships with students a non-racist approach was professionally essential. Indeed, for most such an idea was not stated directly in answer to my question, 'What do you do in practice which represents Multicultural or Anti-Racist Education?', but was implicit in their replies to other questions. Some teachers from a variety of different departments, however, directly maintained that their non-racism was an example of what they did in practice. They stressed that Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education was, in the words of an English teacher, 'more to do with your attitudes and relationships with students than what you teach'. In their practice, therefore,

they strove for a sensitivity towards students' cultural backgrounds, an avoidance of cultural or racial stereotyping and equality of treatment.

Few teachers outside the English and Integrated Curriculum departments considered that Multicultural or Anti-Racist Education involved a particular approach to pedagogy. One exception was the Head of the Science department. He felt that the most important aspects of Science teaching were the evaluation of evidence and problem solving. Teaching these skills meant a particular pedagogy in which students were more involved in the process of learning. These skills, he argued were 'transferable'. Students could use them to ask questions about the social world and how it was constructed. He explained:

If they've learned to ask questions and to think and to use their skills of judgement and weighing up evidence, well it's a natural move to asking questions like 'Why is it that some people are better off than others?' or 'Why is food used the way it is?' or 'Why is tobacco grown in Kenya when what the Kenyans need is more food?'

A pedagogy which encouraged the development of such skills was therefore 'Anti-Racist' and it was one he hoped to integrate into his work. Teachers in the English and Integrated Curriculum departments had similar views, as we shall see in the next chapter, seeing Anti-Racism as synonymous with a 'progressive' pedagogy with an emphasis on group work and discussion.

A few teachers put forward the view that policies on Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education had implications for the relationship between parents and school. They were again mainly in the English and Integrated Curriculum departments, although the two 'Community' teachers also stressed the importance of this interpretation of policy. They were in favour of a much 'closer' relationship between parents and the school, and in their work as tutors attempted to develop links with the parents of students in their tutor groups, often by visiting them at home if they could not come into school. One English teacher, for example, made a point of visiting all the parents of the students in her tutor group twice a year, in order to discuss the students progress and aspects of their school work, in addition to telephoning or calling if the student or school had a particular problem. But she was very much the exception. The majority of teachers had little contact with parents unless the student was involved in a disciplinary incident. Contact was, of course, very

difficult during the teachers' industrial action because traditional parents evenings and events out of school hours were banned. But the style of teacher/parent interaction, based on regular home visiting, advocated by the teacher above was rejected by many teachers. Some maintained that it was simply 'not part of the job'. 'I am not a Social Worker', said one. Others explained that they were 'not trained for that type of thing'. One woman teacher admitted to being afraid to go out into the local area by herself, and most pointed out that they simply didn't have enough time.

Other Multicultural and Anti-Racist Initiatives

During my field work there were several other developments and events at Milltown High which were of significance to the area of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education. First there were two 'special events' organised by staff during the year. The first of these was called an 'Asian Festival' which took place during the Autumn term of 1985. It was mainly organised by one of the school's 'Community teachers'. Her aim was to give local Asian people an opportunity to talk to students and staff about their culture and lives in Britain. She felt that, because of the preponderance of Afro/Caribbean students at Milltown High, Asian culture was rather neglected, and the racism that there was in the school was often directed at Asian people. Various events were organised over a week in the 'community unit', a small building adjacent to the school which had previously been the sixth form centre. They included talks on Asian religions, languages and history given by a number of local Asian people, films about Asian people in Britain, demonstrations of music and cooking, and displays of books, photographs, costumes, paintings and artefacts. Students from different classes took part in the festival at various times during the week. In the sessions that I observed their response was favourable. Most appeared to enjoy the 'special' occasion, and some of the older students especially mixed freely with the adult Asian guests.

A second event took place in the summer term of 1986. This was an 'Anti-Apartheid Week' which was sponsored by the Local Authority. A number of special events were organised by several teachers in the school and some students went out to take part in activities in other parts of the city. In the school David Benyon talked about Apartheid in assembly, a bus, in which there were photographs and a video about South Africa, was in the school playground for most of the week, and a number of speakers who had experiences or knowledge of South Africa came into the school to talk to small groups of students. For both these special events teachers in the Integrated Curriculum and English department, who displayed the strongest commitment to Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education, were most involved.

Another development was the introduction of a short course in 'Black Studies' as part of the school's Alternative Curriculum (ACS). This was not a course put on especially for ethnic minority students who were turned off

school. It formed part of the 4th year ACS which all students took for part of the week. The aim of the whole scheme in the 4th year was to introduce a number of different courses, which would include new curriculum and 'alternative' teaching styles, with the emphasis on greater student participation and more 'active' learning, for all students. The two teachers in charge had attempted to get as many people from the local community involved in teaching these courses as possible, so that class sizes could be small and a wider range of teaching skills could be drawn upon. A local 'Black Studies group', consisting mainly of Afro/Caribbean people involved in the local community based at a nearby community education centre, offered to take one of these courses. Their course centred around the histories and present situations of ethnic minority people in Britain and the teachers utilised variety of different teaching methods from books to role plays. Unfortunately I was unable to observe these lessons. As the course and the teachers were new to the school, they were, perhaps understandably, unwilling to have me sit in on the lessons. The important point to note, however, is that this course took place thanks largely to the efforts of the organising teachers and their willingness to introduce new approaches and involve local people. This was one of the positive aspects of the ACS scheme which was getting off the ground towards the end of my field work.

A further development, which I have already partly described (see chapter 2), was the specific designation of three members of staff as 'Section 11' teachers. At the end of my field work these teachers had completed one term in their new positions. All three teachers had been initially keen to explore a new role, but by the end of their first term were uneasy because of the lack of a clearly defined job description and the unusual situations that they were placed in. They were expected to provide for the needs of 'Commonwealth immigrants' and their children. In the case of some Asian students one of these needs is often clear - English language tuition. But Milltown High had few such students. Although 57% of the school's students were of Commonwealth immigrant origin the majority of these were Afro/Caribbean students. Their needs were more difficult to establish. For this reason much of the time of the three teachers in their first term was taken up with finding out where problems lay and where they could be of help. One teacher conducted a survey of staff to explore areas of need, but found that most of the teachers did not single out 'Commonwealth immigrant' students in this way. Most maintained that

all the students had important 'needs', especially in language and writing skills. The teachers wanted general classroom assistance rather than specific help with 'Commonwealth immigrant' students. Another teacher explored the issue of Afro/Caribbean dialects and whether these might be sources of special need, with local support teachers and the 'Caribbean English Project' in the nearby community education centre. The other began tentatively a process of consultation about the role of Section 11 teachers with ethnic minority groups in the local area. The results of such discussions were, however, rather inconclusive.

One of the stipulations of the new Section 11 role was that the teachers were not to teach mainstream classes. They were to act in an advisory capacity or to give assistance in the classroom. The three teachers at Milltown High over their first term attempted to broaden their own knowledge of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education, of appropriate resources and approaches, by attending meetings and INSET sessions. They had begun to feed back some of this knowledge to the rest of the staff in a limited way. All three had also offered assistance to classroom teachers and had spent some of their time each week in classrooms. In class they provided extra individual attention for all students who were perceived as needing help, as it seemed totally inappropriate to restrict their activities to 'Commonwealth immigrant children'. To have done so would have been to contradict their belief in non-racially based classroom interaction. In practice they were often drawn into classrooms where teachers were having problems with classroom control. In these circumstances an 'extra pair of hands', as they were sometimes perceived by other staff, could be extremely helpful in maintaining classroom order. There was a danger, as one of the Section 11 teachers said, of them becoming a 'police service'. This was a tendency that all three teachers attempted to guard against. The credibility of the teachers was difficult to establish because of this stipulation that they could not teach full classes. They all felt that other teachers thought they were on 'some sort of cushy number' as they had no set timetable. Two also explained that they found it difficult to adapt to the role of adviser or assistant to others. An advisory role meant they were sometimes seen as critics and therefore as threatening the autonomy of classroom teachers. An assistant's role meant they were no longer in charge of planning or responsible for classroom activities, but had to work within another teachers organisation, which they did not find easy.

The three teachers were also involved in a number of other activities. One spent a lot of time in an evaluation of the school's ACS scheme, one, who had previously been a 'Community Liaison' teacher, continued much of his previous work involving attending meetings of various groups in the local area and communicating with parents and local people, and the other attempted to set up a 'link school' scheme with a suburban all-white school. They were thus involved in a variety of activities, many at the exploratory stage. It remains to be seen how their roles develop, and indeed the extent to which their work will assist in providing for the needs of students of 'Commonwealth immigrant origin'.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have attempted to document the responses of teachers at Milltown High to L.E.A. and school policies on Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education. Whilst most had favourable views towards the idea of policies on this issue some argued that they were being given too high a priority in the L.E.A. and the school. They believed other matters were of more pressing importance. In terms of the policies themselves most teachers interpreted them as containing a commitment to teaching about other cultures in order to foster tolerance and better community relations and to adopting a non-racist approach in their relationships with students. A minority of teachers, mainly concentrated in the English and Integrated Curriculum departments, went further and interpreted policies as part of a broader commitment to reform which included a student-centred pedagogy, political education, and closer home/school links. There was thus a lack of consensus on the broader implications of a policy on Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education, which is perhaps not surprising given the fact that there had been little whole-school discussion of the policy either in its formulation or its implementation.

Teachers' interpretations of Anti-Racism were also influenced by their perception of what forms of racism, if any, there were in education and more specifically at Milltown High. Here again there was a diversity of views. Many teachers conceded that there was racism in the educational system, but most restricted their observations to pointing to the possibility of curriculum bias and prejudicial teacher attitudes. These they felt were not apparent at Milltown High. Others, however, had a broader view of racism which included school structures, more subtle practices and the organisation of the educational system. These they thought were more difficult to combat. A minority believed that racism in education was much exaggerated and that policies which were premised on its existence and yet did not identify it clearly were largely worthless. It was largely these teachers who complained about the over-high priority being given to such policies.

In terms of curriculum practice most of those who claimed to be adopting Multicultural and Anti-Racist approaches were concentrated in the English, Integrated Curriculum, Drama and Humanities departments. Others, whilst not disagreeing with the basic principles, thought that such approaches were

inappropriate to their curriculum area. Most teachers, however, argued that they adopted a non-racist approach towards students which they felt was synonymous with their basic occupational values - tolerance, non-racism, individualism and universalism.

Footnotes

- 1) Halsey (1972) made a similar point (see chapter 10).
- 2) Music has not been mentioned, because I was unable to interview the Music teacher on this issue as she was on extended sick leave for most of the time I was in the school.

Chapter Six

Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education in Practice - The English Department

Introduction

This chapter and the next contain case studies of two subject departments at Milltown High School. I chose to concentrate upon the English and Humanities departments because I thought that in curriculum terms here I would be most likely to find Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education. There were teachers who were developing Multicultural and Anti-Racist approaches in other subject departments and I have briefly described their efforts in the last chapter. I was unable for practical reasons to observe their work in detail. Here I want to describe at some length the subject sub-cultures of two departments and consider the extent to which they had been influenced by the school's commitment to Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education. Both chapters are similar in format. I will introduce the teachers and describe the context in which they worked. I will then examine their subject perspectives and their approaches to Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism. Finally I will describe the teaching that I observed in the departments.

The data that I use was collected throughout my field work from largely unstructured interviews, informal conversations, observations in and out of lessons and documents. The members of the two departments (especially the English department) spent a considerable amount of time talking to me about their work and allowed me to observe many of their lessons. In the case of the English department I became, over the course of the field work, almost a member of the department and mixed informally and socially with the teachers. Several members of this department became key informants and provided me with valuable information about the wider workings of the school.

The English Department - Introduction.

When I began my field work at Milltown High in September 1985 the English Department was in a state of some disarray. Jennifer Green, the head of department, was on maternity leave. Susan Parker, the second in the department, had been suddenly promoted to deputy head for a year whilst Mary Fryer, deputy head and English teacher, went on a year's secondment. Janet Rogers, an English teacher who had also been prominent in the department when my research was planned, left late in the summer term and had not been replaced by the start of the Autumn term. At the first department meeting of the new term it became clear that Susan Parker was to attempt something of a holding operation as head of department for one term until Jennifer Green returned, whilst also performing her new role as deputy head. A new young teacher, Jane Gabriel, had been appointed to fill one of the vacant posts for a year, and the head hoped to find supply teachers to cover the teaching loads of Mary Fryer and Jennifer Green. Shortly afterwards, Elizabeth Allen a part time member of the department, left to go on maternity leave, creating a further gap on the English timetable to be filled.

In the second week of term two supply teachers were found, Graham Chester, who had recently returned from teaching in a language school in China, and Enid Peters, a retired head of house who had worked in the school 3 years previously. For a term the department lacked real leadership as Susan Parker tried to perform two roles, and the new staff struggled to cope with often difficult classes. What had, when I first visited the school, appeared to be a stable department with a clear view of its role and philosophy had been transformed into a fragmented and disparate group struggling to 'survive' from day to day. Only when Jennifer Green returned from maternity leave in January 1986 did some semblance of stability and sense of unity begin to return.

Despite all this the English department enjoyed high status in the school. It was a 'core' subject and enjoyed a generous allocation of time on the school timetable - four lessons per week from a twenty five lesson week. The head frequently singled out the English teachers as the sort of teachers that he wished to have in the school. They were in tune with his educational philosophy and he often used their practices as examples of those he wished

to encourage. As one member of the department remarked, 'we're his radical babies'.

The department itself had played a central role in the development of the school and especially in the school's engagement with the issue of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education. The previous head, who had run the school's working party on Multicultural Education in the late 1970s, had taught in the department and had seen the English staff as something of a vanguard in this movement. As Jennifer Green explained, over the eight years that she had been in the department the English teachers had been the ones who had 'thought deeply' about this issue. She, herself, had been a member of the working party throughout its three years of life, and was in fact the only surviving member left in the school.

The department occupied a suite of four rooms on the ground floor at the back of the school (although some classes were held in rooms elsewhere as four rooms were not always enough) and had the use of a large stock room at the end of the corridor. This was not the most salubrious location as the corridor was something of a thoroughfare for students passing from the C.D.T. area to the assembly hall or 'house' room and students coming down the stairs from the Maths and Science areas. Lessons were often interrupted by the noise of passing students, or when some students deliberately banged on classroom walls or flung open doors as they passed. In fact, it was one of the most chaotic and noisy areas of the school at lesson changes with groups of students meeting up and hanging around, a practice which created considerable supervision problems for the English teachers whose 'territory' this was. Nevertheless, it was a fairly substantial base and placed the department alongside the other 'major' departments in terms of room allocation. The core members of the department were based in these rooms, each teacher having virtually sole use of 'their' room. The space clearly 'belonged' symbolically to the English department and to individual teachers within the department.

In terms of resources the department was relatively well endowed and well organised. Stock had accumulated over the years, and the department had, in the past received a number of special grants from L.E.A. inspectors to purchase resources, especially 'Multicultural and Anti-Racist' books. Each classroom provided the base for one year's books and materials which were stored in wallcupboards and converted lockers, the stockroom being reserved for materials which were considered out of date, but not yet out of date enough to

justify being thrown away. For every year there were a substantial number of novels, short stories, plays and books of poetry for teachers to choose from. In addition there were a number of filing cabinets in Jennifer Green's room which provided a bank of back up materials, short stories, comprehensions, and poems, that teachers could use. These were organised on a thematic basis so that teachers could, if they wished, develop work around a particular topic. Because of this classroom storage system it was not unusual to see English teachers before, after and sometimes during lessons going into each others' rooms to find or replace sets of books or materials. Jennifer Green often used this as a means of 'keeping an eye on the department'. Other members of the department by doing the same received important information on the types of teaching that were going on. This served to reinforce the sense of comradeship that existed.

Most teaching in the department took place in mixed ability groups which all the core English teachers preferred. However, in the 4th year a top set was selected which did two courses to exam level - English Language and Literature, rather than just Language. This was done mainly for pragmatic reasons as school timetabling did not allow the provision of extra time for students to do two English courses, and the teachers felt that only the most able would be capable of doing the work required. All students were taught English Language 16+ (later G.C.S.E.) which was course work assessed and all were given the opportunity to enter for this examination provided they had produced adequate course work.

The English Teachers.

The four main English teachers taught full time in the department and shared a common perspective on English teaching and a common subject identity. This group were all women. Jennifer Green, the head of department, Susan Parker, second in the department and temporary deputy head, Alison Mitchell, responsible for the library, and Jane Gabriel, a probationary teacher. For some of this time Graham Chester also taught full time in the department, but while he shared some of the educational views of this core group, he became increasingly isolated over the year as his teaching and classroom control were more and more regarded as a complete disaster by the others. Half way through the year he went on sick leave, suffering from stress, in part precipitated by the growing sense of crisis that surrounded his teaching. He later left the school. Fred Taylor, one of the deputy heads also taught eight lessons per week in the department, but his time and energies were concentrated elsewhere. He played only a small part in the social life of the department and he frequently did not attend department meetings. Whilst he agreed with some of the ideas current amongst the core English teachers he distanced himself from others. He preferred his 'own way' in the classroom. The four core English teachers came from diverse backgrounds, but nevertheless they had a number of similar experiences and interests which provided common bonds.

Jennifer Green had been at Milltown High longer than the others (eight years with maternity leave breaks to have her two children). She had come as a probationary teacher and had developed a strong attachment to the school. She became head of department in 1981 and when the L.E.A. reorganised its secondary schools in 1982 she was one of the few staff who opted to stay in the school, placing it first in her list of choices. She came from a middle class background, and was educated at a convent school where she found the teaching 'dull, unimaginative and traditional'. She wanted her teaching to be the opposite and was an extremely enthusiastic classroom teacher. She derived immense satisfaction from her work, and was strongly committed to the school and the neighbourhood. When she started teaching she said:

I used to give it my all. I used to do loads and loads of extra things and from that got a lot of pleasure. I discovered early on that in English

teaching the more you put in the more you get out. When I came to Milltown High I brought that with me.

Her ideas about English teaching were based mainly on her classroom experience at Milltown High, but also on the wide variety of in-service courses that she had attended. Amongst these figured highly a number of courses relating to Multicultural Education and on the various ethnic minority groups in the city. She had been involved in the National Association for Teachers of English, the Association of Teachers of Caribbean and African Literature, and the National Association for Multi-Racial Education. A crucial formative experience, she explained, was her involvement with Milltown High's working party on Multicultural Education which was set up in her second year at the school. She was given a Scale 2 post to read and evaluate Afro-Caribbean literature and advise the department on the use of such material in the classroom. A Multicultural, and later Anti-Racist, approach to English teaching became central to her educational perspective.

Susan Parker had had a rapid rise to the position of deputy head. This meant that she could not devote all her energy to the English department as she had done in the past, but her influence was still strong. She ran the department while Jennifer Green was on maternity leave, and continued to teach English, spending much of her 'spare' time in school with the English teachers. She was from a working class background, and was educated in a local grammar school which as she said, 'didn't impress me very much'. After teacher training college she travelled and worked in a number of secondary schools. In 1977 she moved to a large multi-ethnic comprehensive school in Milltown where she eventually became second in the English department. At L.E.A. school reorganisation she was moved to Milltown High, her first choice school, as scale 2 second in the department. She was shocked not to be given a post on her present scale 3, but put this down to the fact that she was pregnant, did not interview well, and espoused 'radical' things like anti-sexism which, she explained, the interviewing inspector thought was 'a big joke'. She was attracted by Milltown High's 'radical image' and on reflection thought that coming to the school was 'one of the best accidents that happened to me'. Not only had she become a deputy head, but also she had enjoyed the opportunity to develop her 'equal opportunities work' which had meant organising special events, curriculum development and in-service training in Anti-Sexism. She

explained that she had always been 'a very committed teacher' and so she was often involved in extra-curricular work and activities. She also had wider political commitments to womens' groups and to working for gender equality. One of the attractions of the English department for her was that it consisted of a group of women working collectively, sharing decisions and supporting each other.

Alison Mitchell was also from a working class background. She was a 'mature' entrant to teaching having taken her degree after working and having children. Originally she had wanted to go into social or probation work but this proved difficult and teaching fitted in well with her family commitments. She qualified as a teacher in 1981 and had worked in two other schools in Milltown on temporary contracts before coming to Milltown High in 1983. Initially she was hesitant about coming to the school, unsure whether she would be able to cope with the difficulties of an inner-city school. Nevertheless she felt an 'intellectual and emotional commitment to an inner-city school', which stemmed from her own working class background and political views. At Milltown High she thought it would be 'easier to take up the sorts of things that I am interested in' which included 'discussing political issues' and 'combatting racism'.

The most junior teacher in the department was Jane Gabriel. Her parents were both teachers. Her family background and education at a specialist music school and university gave her what she termed 'a very fundamental philosophy of questioning' which led her to value a style of learning based upon argument, debate and discussion. Like Susan Parker, she was a committed feminist and was involved in politics and union affairs whilst at University. After teacher training she spent a year teaching English in a language school in Italy. When she returned in 1984 she took a job in a suburban school just outside of Milltown which she did not enjoy. She found the students 'racist' and often 'very difficult', the head of department 'over critical and patronising' and the majority of the teachers conservative and parochial. After two terms she decided to leave. She was attracted to Milltown High because of its 'radical' reputation and thought that it would be the type of school she could work in, where she could 'relax and be myself', in other words realise her 'substantial identity' (Ball 1972, Woods 1981). She began teaching at Milltown High in September 1985.

The English teachers had several things in common which led them toward a similar subject perspective. First, all had been dissatisfied with the 'traditional' aspects of their own schooling, and had come into teaching partly in order to change things. Second, they were all committed feminists. Their careers were very important to them and they were all also involved in Anti-Sexist work in the school. Both Susan Parker and Jane Gabriel were also involved in feminist organisations outside the school. Third, they shared wider political commitments. All had socialist sympathies. They were concerned about exploitation, inequality, racism and sexism. Part of their personal way of challenging these aspects of society was to teach in an inner city school like Milltown High. They shared, what Alison Mitchell called, 'an intellectual and emotional commitment' to the school. Indeed, unlike some of their colleagues who had been redeployed to the school or forced to continue working there because they could not get out, they had all chosen specifically to work there and they often spoke in positive terms about the school, describing it as 'exciting', 'interesting', 'innovative', and 'liberating'. As Alison Mitchell said, 'other schools must be very dull in comparison, I wouldn't want to work anywhere else'.

It was these types of interests which combined with a common subject perspective and wider interests in the arts and theatre that created a strong bond between the English teachers at Milltown High. It was a bond which was strengthened by their belief in team work and the collective management of the department. They often spent breaks and lunchtimes together in the same part of the staffroom, talking and sharing ideas and experiences, thus building up a strong subject sub-culture.

The English Teachers' Subject Perspective.

The four English teachers had very similar views about their 'subject paradigm' i.e. the nature of appropriate content of English curriculum (Ball and Lacey 1980), or what should be taught, but slightly divergent views on 'subject pedagogy' i.e. 'the system of ideas and procedures for the organisation of learning in the classroom under specific institutional conditions', or how it should be taught. However, this divergence of view on pedagogy was more a difference in pragmatic response to the classroom environment at Milltown High than a difference in philosophy. Here there was a general consensus.

They rejected the rationalist/functionalist conception of English teaching common in the 'elementary' tradition of English education with its emphasis on the acquisition of basic skills of reading, writing, grammar, spelling and punctuation (see Ball 1983). But they conceded that as many of the students at Milltown High lacked or were weak in basic language skills the teaching of such skills was important. Not to provide these skills would be doing the students a great disservice, denying them the 'personal power', as Jane Gabriel said, to affect their own lives. Jennifer Green explained:

There are some functional skills you've got to give....So, for example, by the beginning of the 5th year....if it's quite obvious that a student isn't going to be getting a 16+, then we've got to be looking towards a basic English....We have to give them enough skills to be able to go out and read a map or read a set of instructions...those skills are important, because you are helping them to deal with the real world, and communication in all its forms.

But the inculcation of basic skills was never seen as the only or even the main priority and it was not used to justify the selection out of a separate group - a 'remedial group' who needed different treatment - as is the case in many secondary schools. It was also not a narrow interpretation of the idea of basic skills. Basic skills meant the ability to use language, spoken and written, in a variety of different forms not merely the ability to spell, punctuate or comprehend a written passage. Moreover, it did not mean that a 'grammarian' type pedagogy was appropriate. The English teachers firmly

believed that basic language skills were learned through the practical use of language, through talking and discussion, creative writing that could be drafted and re-drafted, and through reading literature and and other forms of writing. As Jennifer Green said:

I really do believe that literature should be where you spend your money and you should use that as the stimulus for your language work. Rather than spending a lot of money on textbooks with exercises that people then work through. It's very uninspiring and very boring....and it wouldn't do them (the students) any good.

The only time that 'exercises' were appropriate was when a common fault was noted and all the class could work on it together or if needed as a 'survival strategy' (Woods 1979) where a teacher was having 'problems' with a particular group and needed to 'settle them down'. In the latter case 'exercises' provided the sort of 'mindless, mechanical work', in Jennifer Green's words, that could enable the classroom teacher to 'survive'.

Jennifer Green abhorred what she saw as the government's attempt to bring back specific language teaching:

It's absolute nonsense. We all know from all the research and from years of being taught like that ourselves that it's a complete and utter waste of time....Taking language apart like that does nothing to give the children confidence in their own language, and to build on it....To work them rigidly through grammatical exercises....is just bad English teaching....Language isn't acquired like that. Language is caught not taught. It's caught by being in a rich language environment where you are reading and constantly talking and discussing and thinking. It's about cognitive development and you won't learn that by going through a book of exercises. It's dry, bad English teaching.

However, the English teachers did not see themselves merely as developers of language skills. English, they felt, was more than that. Central, to their view was the idea that through reading and discussing literature students would come to an increased awareness of themselves and their relationships with others, and would explore moral issues and develop qualities of

thoughtfulness, tolerance, respect for others and empathy. Jennifer Green talked about what she called 'the hidden curriculum' of English teaching which involved 'developing' them as people, to think and feel and act'. The students would, they believed, become better people by reading and discussing characters and situations that they read about, by writing and expressing their own views and experiences, and by discussing the writing of others who had done the same. In this sense English was seen as 'a curriculum for personal development' (St.John-Brooks 1983). The English curriculum was an opportunity to inculcate certain key values, one of which was Anti-Racism.

Thus, for example, Jane Gabriel hoped:

As a teacher I'm wanting to become aware of each student and I want the students to become aware of each other and that takes a long time. I want them to learn social skills. I want them to share their own experiences and feelings, to understand each other. I want them to learn how to discuss, how to listen.....and to like reading. I want them to bring out their experiences in their writing....to communicate their experiences in their writing.

The English teachers stressed the importance of the 'relationships' that they established with the students. Jennifer Green maintained that 'good English teaching is about good relationships'. Susan Parker explained that she thought it was important that the students saw her as a person rather than just as a teacher and often talked about her own life and experiences with classes. The 'good' English teacher was expected to have wide concerns - for the students' ideas, experiences, values and attitudes and also for their personal welfare. In this way the English teachers saw themselves as sometimes more of a pastoral teacher than the students' own tutor. Indeed, they all prided themselves on their pastoral work, and the fact that they could always be approached by students if they wanted to talk about things that concerned them. Often they would spend break times in their rooms talking and socialising with students. Jennifer Green explained:

You can't just teach at Milltown High. You've got to give more than that. It's being a social worker, being a parent, being a friend or advisor and all the rest of it. You can just teach, but all you will do is just survive.

You can get very bitter and twisted and very cynical, because you will never get anything from the kids. You will never really get to know them or to understand them.

This concern with personal relationships did not derive from a psycho/therapeutic model of the teacher's role in which they were expected to compensate for the emotionally disturbed backgrounds of their students (c.f. Stone 1981, Sharp and Green 1975), but from a view that English was essentially about developing students as 'people'(1).

The English teachers also agreed that another of their main aims was increasing social and political awareness amongst their students. Indeed, this was part of their commitment to social change and to working in an inner city school. In a small way they wanted to work towards a better society and saw their work as teachers as part of this. Their aim was to raise the consciousness of their students through the consideration of literature and other materials which addressed social and political issues. Thus many of the books and materials that they selected for classroom use were concerned with such issues. Susan Parker argued that it was essential that an English course raised 'the whole issue of oppression and injustice' and Alison Mitchell spoke of the need to 'raise issues and to raise consciousness'. Their aim was not to directly promote a particular political view, but to raise issues for discussion. They wanted students to be able to think critically about the social world and make independent judgements. Jennifer Green, for example, said she aimed to:

Help the kids to think critically so that when they leave they are, I hope freer people in their minds. That they are able to analyse situations and think critically and to question, to articulate....That to me is what English is all about....not just to communicate what they want, but to stand back and listen, think, and I really believe in a language for life. To give them the skills to be better, that sounds a bit cosy, to be better people.

Jane Gabriel espoused a similar opinion, though noting that this might place teachers in a slightly invidious position vis-a-vis students:

I see teaching as a political thing....What I want for students is to be able to stand up for him or herself....So it's life skills, but life skills for me isn't just being able to drive a car or fill in a form or cook for yourself or whatever, it's more fundamental. To be able to challenge and be able to argue....So as a teacher you are in a very interesting situation with students who might have been very quiet at the beginning of the year, but who begin to challenge and find confidence in themselves.

Although they believed that it was impossible to conceal their own views and remain neutral in the classroom all the English teachers aimed to encourage the discussion and expression of a variety of viewpoints. However, they conceded that the material they presented to students and the issues they raised for discussion were a product of their rather left-wing concerns and opinions. This was justified by Susan Parker by reference to the conservative bias of mass media and of many of the students themselves:

I feel very strongly that the establishment line is already presented and you have to work very hard if they are to have a fair picture, if they are to have a balance, because they generally start off with an establishment view. So I do tend to present a strong alternative view and with a bright group I express my own views....but always leave them open to challenge....A lot of our kids believe it is right that they should have less money and fewer facilities than say someone from Sandhall (a middle class suburb). They argue that someone with a lot of money is entitled to have it because they have worked hard for it....So I tend to put the alternative view. It's my job to make them question and make them be critical of the injustices in our society, but obviously what I see as an injustice someone else may see as fair.

Susan Parker's aim was more 'balanced learning' than 'balanced teaching' (Stradling et al 1984). She recognised that students learned about controversial political issues in other areas of their life and she wanted to challenge their existing views by presenting alternatives to those she felt were dominant. This sometimes led her to play a 'devil's advocate' role, although the views she advocated tended, more often than not, to derive from her own political beliefs.

The aims of the English teachers can then perhaps be said to traverse what Ball and Lacey (1980) call the 'creative/expressive' and the 'sociological' paradigms. In practice these aims were reflected in the curriculum that the English teachers selected and the pedagogy they employed. Most teaching in the department was organised around a series of class readers which were selected on the basis of several criteria. First, the books had to be exciting, and 'to have a good plot' in order to 'capture the kids' interest'. It was no use attempting a book just because it was 'right on and trendy' if it bored the students and therefore created motivational problems. Second the books had to be in some way 'relevant' to the lives of the students (c.f. Grace 1978) which meant they had to either reflect the student's environment or the concerns of his or her age group. Preferably the book should include some ethnic minority or working class characters or be set in an inner city area. A third criterion was that books should 'raise issues for discussion' especially issues of moral, social or political concern such as racism, or other injustices.

In the second and third years (first year English was the responsibility of the Integrated Curriculum) the teachers liked to use historical novels like 'Friedrich' by Hans Peter Richter, a story about a Jewish boy growing up in pre-war Germany, and 'Underground to Canada' by Barbara Smucker, a story about the 'underground' escape routes used by black American slaves. Several books had adolescent relationships as their central theme and often issues of racism were closely interwoven. For example, all the teachers used 'My Mate Shofiq' by Jan Needle, a story about the relationship between a white boy who overcomes his own racial prejudice and forms a deep friendship with a Pakistani boy, 'Gowie Corby Plays Chicken' by Gene Kemp, about a white boy alienated from school whose life is changed by a black American girl who comes to live next door, and Rosa Guy's 'The Friends' which concerns the experiences of a young West Indian school girl forced to join her father living in Harlem, New York. The classic story of culture clash, 'Walkabout' by James Vance Marshall, about a white English boy and girl having to survive in the Australian outback with an Aboriginal boy, was also popular.

In the fourth and fifth years the teachers chose from a wide range of books. The English Language and Literature 16+ courses that the department used were based upon continuous assessment, which meant that individual students had to present a folder of completed work at the end of their fifth year to be assessed. Although the examination board provided a list of

suggested reading materials there was considerable freedom. Certain books, however, were more often used than others. Two books from the Caribbean Writers series were popular. 'Green Days by the River' by Michael Anthony was one. Set in Trinidad, it is the story of a 15 year old black boy growing up, coping with various family crises and forming a relationship with a young Indian girl. Its main theme is the boy's developing attitudes and values. Another was 'The Humming Bird Tree' by Ian McDonald, which again is set in Trinidad and is about the relationship between a rich white farmer's son and two Indian children who are family servants. The theme is the deeply racist structure of Trinidadian society in the 1930s and the way the children's friendship is destroyed by their respective class/racial positions and cultures. The theme of racism was also common in other books used with this age group. 'To Kill a Mockin Bird' by Harper Lee, a story about racial oppression in 1930 s America, 'The Basketball Game' by Julius Lester, which concerns the relationship between a black boy and a white girl in a southern American town in the 1950s, and 'Rainbows of the Gutter' by Rukshana Smith about a young black man moving into adulthood in London in the 1970s. More widely known books and plays were also used - 'The Diary of Anne Frank', Orwell's 'Animal Farm', Golding's 'Lord of the Flies', Barstow's 'The Human Element', Miller's 'The Crucible', Brighouse's 'Hobson's Choice', Macbeth and Romeo and Juliet, for example, in addition to various short stories, plays, poems and non-literary material such as newspaper articles and advertisements. Teachers drew from the department's large stock according to preference and what they felt was most appropriate for the ability and interest of individual classes. The aim was to interest by being topical and 'relevant', to provide material that was exciting and good to read which related in some way to the students' world and experiences, and to create maximum opportunity for raising the issues that the teachers regarded as important.

All the English teachers emphasised the importance of a pedagogy based on discussion and talk - whole class, small groups, and one-to-one discussion. 'Students actually learn by talking, they develop ideas and opinions by talking', Jennifer Green emphasised. Whilst silence was something that they would strive to achieve in certain circumstances, they said that they would suspect an English teacher whose room was always silent. Jennifer Green suggested that one of the most important developments in English teaching in the school and nationally in recent years had been the recognition that oral

work was central. In a document on English teaching that she prepared for the Integrated Curriculum teachers she emphasised the paramount importance of students' oral work:

Discussion work should be encouraged and built into every stage of this topic (a unit of English work in the I.C.). Only by sharing, verbalising and listening will the student develop and articulate ideas of their own. The students should be given the opportunity to talk in groups, in pairs and as a class at every conceivable opportunity.

Discussion was also at the centre of their ideas about the assessment of students' work. They rarely gave marks for pieces of work. In fact the only time marks were given was when work was formally graded for 16+. Work was corrected, often with the student him/herself so that student and teacher could discuss the way it could be altered or improved. Teachers commonly wrote lengthy comments on a student's work so that it could then be re-drafted or re-written.

The English teachers were also attempting to move towards a style of learning that gave students greater control over their learning and more opportunities to express their thoughts and opinions. Susan Parker talked about how she was attempting to:

Move away from teacher as instructor and moving towards debates which are genuinely open-ended, asking questions which are genuinely open-ended, asking students how they feel about something and there being no set answer that I'm expecting....Allowing a genuine openness in response....Moving towards a student rather than teacher-centred learning.

Jane Gabriel drawing on her experience of teaching adults, eschewed the teacher as authority figure role. She wanted to create situations where she could discuss things with students on a more equal basis in which she would act as advisor, facilitator and provider of resources. English teaching, she argued, should be how she had experienced it at university, a co-operative exercise based upon discussion, critical comment and argument. Susan Parker described how she had set up a scheme of work for a first year group (this was before my field work started when the first year students were not

involved with the Integrated Curriculum) which 'the students ran themselves'. The students had a series of tasks to complete which involved reading, getting into small groups to discuss things, and writing assignments which they completed at their own pace. Her role as teacher was to provide resources, advice, support and ideas and to work with individuals and small groups of students. In this way, she argued students would learn skills of 'self-discipline, discussion, social awareness and thinking'.

However, whilst Susan Parker believed that this was the best way of organising English teaching, she conceded that it was not often possible to organise it on such a basis at Milltown High. Teachers often had other commitments which meant they had not always got the time to devote to such elaborate preparation, resources were sometimes scarce, and because classrooms were often used by other classes it was not possible to leave equipment and materials out, they had to be locked away at the end of every lesson. Moreover, the students could often exploit such situation where apparently the 'normal' methods of classroom control had been abandoned. Such was the case, she argued, with Graham Chester's classes. He seemed to have all the 'right' ideas but was unable to put them into practice. 'When I went into his classroom I was horrified by the chaos', she said, 'They'd looked at him and said "How far can we push him?" and he was doing lots of interesting work and some quite gimmicky work, and they were actually bored by the gimmicks....So I've said to him forget you're radical stuff, get their heads down and get them working hard, be horrified if they do something wrong.' In practice, then Susan Parker explained, 'I'm a bit old fashioned. I'm quite authoritarian.' She espoused the classroom teacher's conventional wisdom that:

My experience has been that you assert yourself in a fairly authoritarian sort of way, because that's what children expect of teachers and you prove to them that you can be that kind of teacher, and then they see it as a bonus when you're not being that kind.

This pragmatism about pedagogy was shared by Jennifer Green and Alison Mitchell. Jennifer Green described how she played a flexible role in the classroom, a role which varied according to the materials being used and the particular class being taught:

My role changes with the class and the materials that I'm using. I try to be flexible and I try to employ as many different roles as are necessary....I use the most efficient role for fulfilling the task or for getting across what I want to teach. If it's a class reader I take a very formal traditional approach of being the authoritarian teacher in control, in charge, keeping the discipline going, just so the reading can take place, but if they're all working on an individual piece of writing, my role will be to give support and just work with individuals, and give the control back to them to take their work where they want to, but with my help and guidance. If it's a discussion with an older group my role is obviously more informal than it would be with a younger group....It might be just going between groups making comments and suggestions and letting them take it where they want....just guiding it and organising it for them.....I think the younger ones get more done with a more traditional approach. I believe they haven't got the skills of self-discipline yet. Some have, but a lot haven't....So for a while I have to impose it on them....But with the 5th years I've pushed them to the stage where they're now taking control of their own learning and disciplining themselves....a gradual transfer of power to them in certain situations....But it has to be on my terms. If you spent years debating what the terms should be you'd never get any further and you're in a situation where you haven't got that much time.

Thus there was often a gap between ideals and reality, or paradigmatic and pragmatic aspects of their perspectives (Hammersley 1977). Jennifer Green agreed:

I think that's (the gap between pedagogic ideals and classroom practice) particularly true of this school. I think the reality of the students themselves and the discipline problems don't always allow you to teach in the way you want to teach. I really feel that....Ideally I'd like more time to prepare, think, get materials that were suitable for individual students. I'd like time to write in every student's book what I want them to do. I'd like more individualised learning so they can get on at their own pace, but it doesn't happen....Some can't understand the individual instruction, or use it as an excuse not to begin working for 10 minutes. So I think the

most efficient way of being realistic in this school, and keeping your sanity and keeping yourself with enough life outside so that you're fresh and revitalised every day is to go for the class teacher approach on the whole, because its the most efficient way of getting the students disciplined, down to work and through the work.

Similarly Alison Mitchell conceded that with the older students on exam courses she was concerned that they were not 'getting through the work fast enough' and would not produce enough course work for assessment:

I have a feeling that although I'd like to think I was operating partly in a facilitatory or advisory type role, and that the students played a more active part, that the tendency, and this is often because of the nature of the students and the difficulties that I sometimes have with discipline, that it ends up more like chalk and talk than I would want it to be. Well I'm sure it ends up like that....I'd rather it wasn't like that. A good example would be like with my 5th years. A bit back I decided I'd have them doing group work. I gave them all this Fay Weldon story to study. I gave them all two pages each and gave them a list of things they had to find out and I had them doing it for 3 days and at the end of 3 days it just hadn't been worth it. Now I know that the answer to that is you start it early and you get it eventually, but at this stage in their lives I can't afford that sort of time, and I know that's what's going to happen now until the end of next year is when we do literature questions, yes there will be some discussion, but at the end of the day it'll be me coming back and saying, "here's the notes, here's the quotes", and that's it. I'll try and elicit as much as I can about it, but at the end of the day I'll be doling it out.

She also argued that the students 'like a structure' because they were 'the sort of children that they are', and 'because they run rings round you if you don't give them a tight structure'. In practice this also meant being fairly 'formal' and sometimes 'quite authoritarian' in terms of classroom discipline.

The English teachers then favoured a discussion based pedagogy, emphasising oral work, student participation and greater student control over at least some aspects of their learning. However, they stressed, because of the

circumstances that existed in the school and the nature of the students themselves, that it had to be a flexible pedagogy flavoured with pragmatism if the teacher was to 'survive' (Woods 1979).

The English Teachers Approach to Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education.

Having looked at the English teachers subject perspectives I want now to examine how Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education was incorporated into their views. How did they interpret Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education, and how did this influence their practice?

The first point to make is that the whole issue of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education was central to the department's working philosophy and was intimately bound up with its history. In the late 1970s the then head of department had become aware of the fact that whilst a substantial number of the school's students were Afro/Caribbean, very few of the books and materials used in the department were written by Afro/Caribbean authors or were about the experiences of Afro/Caribbean people. Jennifer Green, then a junior member of the department, was given a Scale 2 post to read 'Multicultural literature' and advise the department on how such materials could be incorporated into the curriculum, and several other teachers in the department began exploring the issue. Jennifer Green subsequently came to play an important role in the school's working party on Multicultural Education. She became head of the department in 1981. The English department gained something of a reputation in the city for its engagement with the issue and, as we have seen, attracted some teachers because of this. In fact the talk, both informally and in interviews, of the English teachers was frequently about Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism. Of course this could have been because I was around investigating the issue, but given the length of my stay and the fact that I came to know them very well, I think this was unlikely. So what did the English teachers mean when they talked about Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education?

It appeared to mean four basic things. First, it meant valuing and not denigrating the backgrounds and cultures of the students. Second, it meant that their approach to the students should be positive and non-discriminatory. Third, it meant the promotion of the value of Anti-Racism, so what they taught emphasised that racism was morally repugnant. And four, it meant that their teaching should be concerned with social and political matters, issues of controversy and injustice, and should be orientated to 'political' aims. Jennifer Green argued that:

An Anti-Racist approach should come into everything you do. It isn't something which you just slot in as a single topic....looking at the 'problem'. It's something you as a teacher should take into every single lesson. So you're using the students' own culture in a very positive, strong way. So it goes right through the curriculum....But having said that I believe it's something more fundamental, deeper than that. It's your attitudes in the end, it's the teacher's attitudes to the students.

In this way, she emphasised, Anti-Racism was the basis of 'good' English teaching. It should underpin everything that the 'good' English teacher did. By 'taking the strengths and positive things about the students' backgrounds and cultures and bringing them into the classroom and celebrating them', Jennifer Green hoped that ethnic minority children, who in the past, she felt, often had rather negative views of their own ethnicity and blackness, stemming from the way such matters were treated in schools and in the media, would come to feel more 'confident' and 'positive' about themselves. The aim was:

To give them the confidence to feel that they can shape things and feel part of our society, an important part of our society, that needs to be recognised and given credit and given fair opportunities, equal opportunities...so that people will be treated on an individual level.

Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education was not seen as a therapy for ethnic minority children lacking in self-esteem (Stone 1981), but as part of a philosophy which emphasised that students' backgrounds and cultures should be respected and valued as of right and every child should enjoy equal of opportunities.

All the English teachers stressed the importance of using the backgrounds and culture of the students. This was reflected in their choice of curriculum, in which 'relevance' was a key criterion. There was a constant search for books and materials which were written by ethnic minority authors or which contained minority group characters and reflected the history and experiences of minority group people. They eschewed a naive Multiculturalism of the 'Saris, Samosas and Steel Band' type. Their approach was not to read novels set in the Caribbean because they had students of West Indian origin in their classrooms. They recognised that the Caribbean and Africa were as distant to many

Afro/Caribbean students as they were to white and that what was going on in British society was far more 'relevant' to most students' experiences. This feeling led Susan Parker to conclude that much that passed for Multicultural Education was 'very misguided':

Our kids' culture is not African music. It's reggae, rastas, robotics, punk. It's the pop scene and music culture. It's not Caribbean. It's the same as Lancashire kids. They don't know much or care much about clog dancing. If you bring in African dance it's as alien to the black kids as the white.

So the search, she explained was for 'novels and poems about black kids in inner cities where....their lives are the norm'.

The importance of the students' backgrounds and cultures was also reflected in their stress on their writing and talking about their own lives and experiences. A common language assignment in the 4th year, for example, was to write an autobiography, and in other years creative writing utilising events and experiences in family and community life were encouraged.

The department's approach to the issue of Afro/Caribbean dialect (see Trudgill 1975, Richmond 1979, Edwards 1979, 1981) provides an example of the attitude to the backgrounds and ethnicity of the students. There was a fair amount of consensus on this issue, though with, as we shall see, one or two reservations. It was felt that as Afro/Caribbean dialects were 'part of many students' identity' that their use should be encouraged and valued in school. Jennifer Green explained:

I believe in getting kids to think that their dialect in whatever form is something that they should be proud of...to make them feel self confident.

She said the department's policy (2) was that dialect should and could be used by students 'when appropriate' and the aim was to encourage 'bi-dialectalism'. Often the English teachers would read and discuss poems that were written in Afro/Caribbean dialects. The work of Louise Bennett, Valerie Bloom, and Lynton Kwesi Johnson, for example, were used. Books would be used where dialogues were written in dialect. 'The Humming Bird Tree' by Ian McDonald was an example. Jennifer Green maintained that it was important that English teachers actually read dialect aloud to their classes and if they did not feel competent

that they should practise until they were. This was part of their responsibility to show that they valued such language forms. She herself was very good at this, but in practice it was something which the other English teachers found difficult to do.

In students' writing the emphasis was on 'using the right form of English for the right purpose', so that students were encouraged to use dialect if they wanted to in writing poems or personal reflections or in stories, where it would form part of natural dialogue between characters, but not in more 'formal' writing such as letters or reports. The policy was to correct any errors which appeared to stem from 'dialect interference' if the mistake was spoiling the writing, given the purpose for which it was intended. In a formal letter or a piece of writing intended to express a point of view in a formal debate, then such errors would be corrected. Failure to do so, the English teachers felt, would be to fail the child. But correction was always done with an accompanying explanation, either verbally or in writing, of the reasons, if this was practical. On a number of occasions I heard teachers explaining such a point to their students generally on an individual level. You had to write in certain ways in certain situations, they said, it was alright to talk in dialect and to sometimes write in dialect, but at other times you had to use 'standard or formal English' because that was what was expected and what would convey meaning more effectively. The department, in fact, developed a co-operative project with a local community education-based Caribbean Language Project to encourage such approaches to language. Students were offered the option of a 6 week course on language awareness during their 4th year with two Caribbean teachers from this project.

Jennifer Green argued that this policy had been very successful over the past few years. When she first came to the school, she said, the students did not use dialect in their work at all, it was primarily used on the corridor, often to abuse staff. Now its use in the latter way had almost disappeared, and the students were willing and able to use dialect where appropriate in their own written work. Quoting the case of one student, who had written an account of her experiences on a recent stay in Grenada with all her family conversations in dialect, she said, 'It works, it's appropriate, it's good. It didn't occur to Elizabeth not to do that'. 'Hopefully,' she said, 'we're getting to the level now where students are having more confidence in using language

appropriately and more confidence to understand where its appropriate to use dialect and where it isn't'.

However, whilst these views were generally accepted and put into practice in the department, Susan Parker expressed some reservations:

I find it difficult to say all this right on stuff about different registers in different situations and a dialect's fine in social situations, but we also need as a balance English that's appropriate to formal situations. All that theory behind respecting everybody's dialect and the grammatical, in inverted commas, inaccuracies of different dialects. But at the same time I know that that is not totally honest because I know that in terms of success in our society dialect is regarded as inferior and there's all those issues that I find very sensitive and it's hard.... It's part of the reason why their parents are not in good jobs, it's part of the reason why their parents live in Chesham and I find it all very sensitive and difficult to handle...When you get interference from dialect in formal essays I talk it through and say it's not actually wrong, but in the formal situation you need this kind of English.... But I find it very sensitive and it touches on a lot of nerves of the students. I don't feel at home talking about those things in a whole class discussion....You see I don't think I'm being totally honest when I say those things about the role of equal value because I know they're not of equal value in our society, and I know their parents are looked down on because they speak patois.

Essentially here Susan Parker was expressing the dilemma, described earlier, of the teacher who values the language her students bring to school, yet is charged with the task of providing equal opportunities for her students to succeed in a society where success is judged in terms of the ability to perform in universalistic cultural forms (c.f. Hargreaves, A. 1978). Her strategy is a compromise, or what Hargreaves calls a 'coping strategy'.

Anti-Racism to the English teachers, however, was not just a matter of valuing and celebrating the backgrounds and cultures of their students. We have seen how they thought that a major part of their work was the development of certain attitudes and values, and Anti-Racism as a value was at the core of their work. It came across in the curriculum that they selected. The materials that they used were not just about racism, but were emphatically

Anti-Racist. In most cases their message was clear, that racism is fundamentally immoral, unjust and divisive. The book 'My Mate Shofiq', for example, is about a white boy who changes his own racist attitudes through his friendship with a Pakistani boy and goes on to fight against the racism amongst his own white friends. Several other books had their heroes and heroines experiencing and resisting racism. The way materials were used in the classroom also reflected this aim, as we shall see later in the chapter. If incidental racism or stereotypical comments occurred in texts the teachers would stop their reading and discuss the instance. This combined to give a very strong Anti-Racist ethos to the whole of the department's work, an ethos which many of the students commented upon when I talked to them in interviews. 'One thing that you can say the English teachers are in favour of', one boy said, 'is race equality. They never stop going on about it!'

This commitment to the value of Anti-Racism was often taken beyond the school by the English teachers. It was part of a broader commitment. Jane Gabriel described how she saw it as 'a constant challenging of stereotypes, images, dominant ideas' and how she would challenge someone who told racist jokes. Jennifer Green came into the staffroom one day and recounted how she and her husband had walked out of a club where they had been with some friends when the performing comedian started telling racist jokes. The other members of the department present warmly supported her action.

Anti-Racism was also central to their view of the political role of English teaching. It was part of talking about the whole issue of 'inequality, injustice, and resistance' as Susan Parker said. Again this was expressed in the department's curriculum, which involved what Susan Parker called 'a positive challenging of racism through literature', but it was also manifest in the pedagogy they espoused with its stress on debate, discussion and student participation. Anti-Racism meant taking issues like the riots in Handsworth in 1985 and, as Susan Parker explained, 'opening up the lesson and talking about why they happened and talking about what racism is and how it affects what's happening in the world'. It meant looking at the experiences of people reflected in literature and discussing issues concerned with the way societies were organised, and it meant talking about issues that were happening in the students' lives and how they were related to the way British society is organised.

Anti-Racism was also, to return to the initial point made by Jennifer Green, about the teachers' own attitudes to and relationships with the students. The English teachers generally displayed a positive attitude towards their students' ethnicity, and regarded the relationships they formed with students as of paramount importance. They generally adopted a reflective attitude to their work in the classroom and to their own attitudes. They saw themselves as inherently racist because of their own backgrounds and upbringing and tried to work consciously to guard against such racism affecting their practice.

This then was how the English teachers saw Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education. It is worth concluding, however, with a note of caution made clear to me by the more experienced English teachers. Whilst Anti-Racism was essentially part of their wider philosophy of English teaching they agreed that the parts of their curriculum which specifically raised the issue of racism could not be tackled lightly. They believed that it was essential that teachers should only introduce the topic if they knew the students in a class very well and a working consensus and mutual trust existed. Otherwise using such material could do more harm than good. Susan Parker, for example, had learned this lesson when she took over a group from Jennifer Green when she went on maternity leave. She began 'The Humming Bird Tree' with them but found that because the students were hostile to her as a new teacher anyway, that they used the racism she was reading from the story to attack her. She was accused of racism by the Afro/Caribbean students and, although she succeeded in talking through that issue with them, she never succeeded in totally winning their confidence. Racism as an issue in the classroom had to be tackled carefully and the students had to be sure of their teacher's commitments.

The English Teachers' Conception of their Students.

We have looked at the subject perspectives of the English teachers and how they approached Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education. How did they perceive their students? As Gerald Grace (1978) notes many contemporary urban teachers are socialised into an atmosphere and language of individualism which means that they eschew discussion of students in terms of social categories such as 'inner city children' or 'working class children' or 'black children'. The English teachers at Milltown High were reluctant to talk about their students in generalised terms or to divide their students into typical categories. 'I hate to generalise' or 'they're all different' or 'they're all individuals' was a common retort to my request that they describe the students that they taught. Generalised categories or stereotypical statements based on impressionistic evidence did not characterise their talk either in interviews or more informal contexts. They were thus unlike the teachers described by some researchers (see for example Beynon 1985, Carrington 1983).

When I enquired about how they saw students' ethnicity they constantly emphasised the dangers of categorising and stereotyping students on the basis of ethnic or racial characteristics. This was part of their Anti-Racist stance. Whilst some differences between ethnic minority students and indigenous white students were noted these were generally seen positively, and frequently differences within ethnic groups in terms of individual personality or disposition were regarded as of much greater importance. Alison Mitchell's response is perhaps typical:

I do find it hard to talk about students as an ethnic group like this. I mean at one time people would have said that Caribbean children were loud and noisy which some of them are, but so are some white children. There's some very quiet black children and some very quiet white children, so I can't go along with that one....again it's got more to do with other things than ethnic background. I think there's some very positive things can come from a Caribbean background. For example, I think they tend to be much more spontaneous than we are. Whether that makes some of them more loud and noisy I don't know....I think that the fact that creole is spoken at home by many black kids is actually a plus because it is a very interesting

use of language. I like listening to it, I like reading it, I find it very exciting. As far as I am concerned white children are dipping out there.

A strong element of the ideologies of these teachers was the importance of viewing and treating students as individuals. Thus it was frowned upon to say 'I treat all children the same', especially where ethnicity was concerned, as it implied that one was blind to or did not value the positive qualities that an individual student possessed by virtue of his/her individual attributes or cultural background.

Despite this reluctance to categorise and generalise the teachers did reveal in interviews and informal talk certain general conceptions of their students. A large number were held to be 'under achieving' or 'difficult to motivate', some were said to be 'very difficult behaviourally' or even 'emotionally disturbed'. Again in common with Grace's teachers they often emphasised the problems and difficulties that the students faced, not in a judgemental way but with an attempt to explain and understand their position. The following were typical comments:

Many of the children here have problems because of high unemployment and all the other inner city problems like housing. (Susan Parker)

We do have a large number of children from disadvantaged homes who have problems coping in the school environment. (Alison Mitchell)

There are a large proportion of children who do come from deprived backgrounds and that means we have far more than our fair share of difficult children to handle. (Jennifer Green)

These problems were explained largely by reference to factors in the student's background or environment. Occasionally explanations would take the form of a 'social pathology' (c.f. Sharp and Green 1975) model of inner city life.

Jennifer Green for example said:

There are very few kids here from what I would class as a normal background i.e. two caring parents....or parents who care in the way that we would think of caring. Quite often the kids are well off materially. I

don't say they are deprived of food and money. They are quite well off in that sense. But deprived of love and time and that's quite often because their parents are working so hard.

But even in this quotation Jennifer Green does not lay the blame directly at the door of parents or working class culture. Indeed, such explanations were rare. More often students' problems were explained by aspects of the inner city environment which were held to be a product of wider social and economic forces. Here is Alison Mitchell talking about the students:

Their families are neglected by the state....They're disadvantaged in the sense that they live in the inner city where resources are run down, there are not enough facilities of the right sort. It's a very all encompassing thing....Successive governments have let down people in the inner city....I know there's been a massive recession which has affected all different parts of the country and places like the North East have been just as badly hit....but it's every thing in the inner city, it's housing, it's health care, everything's been neglected by successive governments, and it's only when trouble starts that any interest is shown....Nothing fundamental is being done about inequality in society. That's where I see it all stemming from - massive inequality and a lot of it in the inner city. That's my political viewpoint. Then we have to deal with the product.

And Susan Parker:

I think it's part of a wider system that takes from the poor to give to the rich, that's my politics. Chesham is neglected, there's high unemployment, the housing is awful. The type of housing shows a lack of concern for people, even under a Labour government....They tend to deal with statistics rather than people, separating architecture, design and planning from the real needs of people....Someone made an awful amount of money out of deck access housing at the expense of a lot of people around here. It's all part of the way our political system works....I don't think many of our kids and families are aware of the real reasons behind many of their experiences, but they are the ones that suffer....Given too many people in a small area there's going to be more violence, more aggression,

more tension, which the kids are then going to bring in to school. I don't think they relate their problems to the whole structure of society, but I think they are.

Several of the English teachers also explained that ethnic minority students suffered additionally from racism which compounded the problems their families faced, but also had a throw back effect on the school, first in terms of the demotivating effect that poor job prospects had, but also on the perceptions minority students had of mainly white institutions. Susan Parker speculated:

I wonder if there is more resentment among black students to white establishments, and you are therefore more of a threat because you represent white establishment. I sense a resentment, until you have proven that you are one of them really....I think it's a factor when you have got students who live in a black community and who see Milltown High as a predominately black school and who are hostile to the police and things like that.

The English teachers, then generally saw their students as 'victims of circumstances' (Grace 1978), but unlike the majority of teachers quoted in Grace's study they did not 'abstain from wider socio-political criticism'. They placed their students' problems within an explanatory framework which stressed the inequality in British society, the lack of concern shown by the state for the area, and racism.

This image of the backgrounds of many of their students did not lead to generalised, negative views of their potential (c.f. Sharp and Green 1975). They were more likely to speak of the underachievement of their students in ways which implied that given appropriate opportunities and more favourable circumstances they could achieve far more. Poor achievement was regarded as resulting from lack of effort, motivation or opportunity rather than an inherent lack of ability. Although students were judged on the basis of their conformity to the teacher's notion of the 'ideal pupil' (Becker 1952b), judgements were never seen as final. It was always possible for a student to change. This was one reason for the department's commitment to mixed ability teaching.

Often the teachers talked about the positive qualities which their students possessed, their resilience, toughness, vitality, straight forward thinking and direct manner which equipped them well for life in the modern world. Indeed, sometimes they argued that the problems presented by students were as much a product of schools themselves, the irrelevant and outmoded curriculum and pedagogy on offer, their petty and bureaucratic forms of organisation, and jaded and demoralised staff. Jane Gabriel most frequently espoused this view:

I think so much of what goes on in school is divorced from the reality of life for many of our students. It doesn't link at all with what is going on in the community around the school. And a lot of teaching I think is still very traditional, you know teacher standing at the front and lecturing, controlling and manipulating them. The students are not given any responsibility for what they do and what they are supposed to learn. It's no wonder they muck about and mess around. It's meaningless for a lot of them.

Although I have focused on the teachers' conceptions of the students in terms of their 'problems', problems created by the inner city environment, and problems created by the school, and this was the dominant view, partly because many of the students themselves did often pose an enormous 'problem' to the teachers in terms of social control (see chapter 9), it is worth stressing that all the English teachers emphasised the range of students that came to Milltown High. For example, Alison Mitchell said:

Some of the children are highly motivated. They can work as well as they would do at Milltown Grammar School....Then we've got those who are very lively, very intelligent, but who waste their time....You get those who struggle very hard and in their own way are very motivated, but who are not very able....Then you get those who are not able and are totally turned off... How many more categories do I need...within this school you've got every category that you would get in a good comprehensive school, except perhaps the lower end of the totally unmotivated and unable child. We've got more of our fair share of those.

The Practice of English Teaching.

I now want to look at some examples of English teaching to see how the teachers' ideas were translated into practice at the 'chalk face'. I shall concentrate on the four core English teachers though the amount of data that I present on each teacher varies as I in fact spent more time in the classroom with some of them than others. It would be a mistake to view the data presented on each teacher as a comprehensive view of their teaching. The picture of each individual is necessarily a partial one as the lessons and classes I observed were only a small sample of their classroom work and I make no strong claims about the representativeness of my observations. What I hope is that the data presented gives a picture of the sort of classroom practice that was common in the department, and also a flavour of the different ways that the teachers translated their ideas into practice and reacted to the reality of classroom life at Milltown High. In most lessons I observed rather than participated, although I was occasionally unavoidably drawn into classroom interaction. Where possible I tape-recorded the lessons, otherwise I took detailed field notes.

Jennifer Green

As Head of the English department Jennifer Green enjoyed a high status both in the department and in the school. She was looked upon as something of a role model by the other English teachers. She was an immensely energetic and enthusiastic teacher, committed to the school and the neighbourhood. Her activities in school were often conducted at a tremendous pace and with great intensity. She often worked late either at school or at home, marking, preparing work or even typing up students' work so that it could be displayed in the classroom. What happened in her classroom was of passionate importance and she appeared to thrive on the adrenalin of classroom interaction. As Jane Gabriel said, 'she gets a real buzz from classroom teaching'. It was a 'buzz' which gave her great pleasure and even thrill when a lesson went well, when a discussion took off, or when a student produced an original piece of work. On occasions like this she would go into the staffroom and enthuse about her work. But there were also times when things went badly when she became

frustrated and depressed, feeling that much of what she had worked for was being spoiled by the problems that were facing the school.

She put a great deal of time and effort into her pastoral role, often spending long periods of time talking to and counselling students. She was one of the few members of staff who regularly visited the parents of students in her tutor group. This was sometimes a control strategy. Going round to see parents was used as a threat and a punishment with some. But it was also a positive attempt on her part to communicate more closely with parents, something which, in a time of industrial action, few teachers were prepared to do. This, she argued, was a crucial aspect of her own Anti-Racism because it communicated to students that they, and their education, mattered.

She put great emphasis on 'building positive relationships with students'. Even those who were the most negative towards school and towards her she would attempt to treat in a friendly and positive way. She argued that it was easy for teachers to slip into feeling very negative about students who were extremely difficult and hostile in lessons, a feeling which often developed into negativeness and hostility on both sides. She always attempted to maintain a positive view of students. Of course this, again was partly a control strategy. By cultivating 'positive relationships' she was attempting to develop binding commitments and a sense of loyalty towards herself as a person which meant student non-conformity was less likely. But it was also an indication of her orientation to teaching and teacher/student relationships.

She espoused a flexible approach to teaching style, but emphasised, in common with the other English teachers an ideal of discussion-based, interactive pedagogy. In practice she appeared to go some way to realising this ideal, but it was an ideal which was often frustrated by problems of classroom control, and also, on occasions, by her own strong commitments and attempts to get across to students particular messages which she felt were important.

I observed her teaching 34 lessons in all. 22 of these lessons were with a mixed ability 3rd year group (3JG, her tutorial group) when the group were studying a set novel 'My Mate Shofiq' by Jan Needle, 4 of them were with her top set 4th year English group who were preparing for a literature assignment on Ian MacDonald's 'The Humming Bird Tree' as part of their G.C.S.E., 4 were with a 'mixed ability' 4th year group preparing for a language assignment, and

4 were with a mixed ability 3rd year group who were doing work on Rosa Guy's 'The Friends' (3).

Jennifer Green generally organised her classroom work around literature. Of the lessons I observed none were devoted to things like grammar work or spelling. Students were expected to develop these sorts of skills through correcting and re-drafting their work following her help or marking. Occasionally she would read a passage to a class and give them comprehension questions, but the bulk of her work was devoted to reading novels, plays, poems and short stories which were then used as a basis for written assignments. Of the 22 lessons I observed with 3JG, for example, class reading and discussion of the issues raised by the text accounted for 11 of the lessons, and 6 were devoted to written work arising from this(4).

The books that Jennifer Green chose were, as in the rest of the department, selected to, where possible, reflect the lives, backgrounds or concerns of her students as she saw them, and also to 'raise issues'. She favoured the public class reading of these books, believing that the books should be read aloud to the whole class so that students could share in a common class experience and enter into the collective enterprise of discussion and analysis of the text and the issues it raised. She herself read often, frequently with great passion and enthusiasm, so that lessons became dramatic performances with students spellbound and gripped by both plot and performance. She was the only English teacher who was really confident reading an Afro/Caribbean dialect which she did to great effect in her reading of 'The Humming Bird Tree'. But she also encouraged the students to read aloud and she succeeded in getting them to do this more than the other English teachers. When dialogue contained dialect she encouraged Afro/Caribbean students, who were willing, to read these sections. In mixed ability classes it was not just the more able students who were asked to read, although they were asked more frequently and did tend to read for longer, but everyone was expected to have a go. If students were unwilling she tried to persuade them, but never forced those who really did not want to or could not read aloud. Her approach was sensitive, but firm. Those who faltered and struggled were encouraged and received lavish praise. In this way, she felt, those students who in the past had been confined to 'remedial' departments and to a stultifying and demotivating curriculum of reading schemes and language exercises were given

the opportunity to share 'real' English work with their peers, and as a result, she maintained, their reading and language skills were improved (5).

Whilst much classroom time was spent actually reading books aloud, often Jennifer Green would break off the reading to explain the historical background or social context of the story. Whilst students could ask questions, it was, as in most classrooms, the teacher's prerogative to stop the reading and expound on the text. She was concerned that the students understood the background to the stories and contexts in which events occurred. So, for example, when reading 'The Humming Bird Tree' she explained carefully the social structure of Trinidadian society in the 1930s, and when reading 'My Mate Shofiq' she explained to students the historical background to immigration in the 1950s and 60s. When reading the latter novel she was keen to rectify any historical misconceptions that the students might have about the reasons for such immigration and the social status which many immigrants at that time were forced to occupy. In order to do this she often used traditional recitation or question and answer techniques (see Barnes 1976).

Jennifer Green also used opportunities in the texts to transmit factual knowledge about other cultures and societies to try to build up the students' awareness or to break down prejudices they might have. On one occasion she arranged for an Asian member of staff to give her class a talk on Pakistani culture, at other times she would draw comparisons from the text with other cultures and societies. Quite often she referred to characters in the book and showed how their attitudes were false or based on preconceived ideas. In 'The Humming Bird Tree', for example, the story describes the derogatory attitudes of a young white upper class boy to the East Indians because they cook their food over fires fueled with cow dung. Jennifer Green pointed out how these attitudes were misconceived and based on inadequate knowledge of the circumstances of the East Indian people.

By using the characters of the books in this way Jennifer Green drew moral lessons from the stories and transmitted the value of Anti-Racism. The racist attitudes of Bernard White, one of the main characters in 'My Mate Shofiq', for example, were continually identified, held up to scrutiny and dismissed as 'cruel and insensitive', 'nonsense', 'rubbish' or just plain 'racist'. Jennifer Green drew attention to the stereotypical views held by many of the characters in this story and explained that they were based on

falsehood, bias and myth. One of the written assignments that she set on this book was on the idea of urban myths. By getting the students to listen to several famous urban myths which she showed them on a T.V. programme, and then to write and to read aloud their own urban myths she hoped, not only to develop the students language work in an entertaining and motivating way, but also to discuss with them the whole notion of fact and fiction, truth and rumour.

Often characters in the stories were presented as role models. Wendy, for example, in 'My Mate Shofiq' was held up in contrast to Bernard as non-racist. 'The beauty of Wendy' said Jennifer Green, 'is that she treats Shofiq totally normally'. Other characters such as Bernard himself are shown changing, becoming wiser and more aware, in this case more Anti-Racist. Jennifer Green drew attention to these changes. 'Look at the change in Bernard', she said, 'compare his attitudes now to what we saw at the beginning of the book. He realises he's changed. He's not racist any more, or he's getting rid of his racism.' She reinforced the clear intentions of the author of this book, to get the reader to share the experiences of the central character, to themselves live through the experiences of the character and learn from them, thereby becoming more aware and better informed. Characters in the stories were frequently publicly judged on the basis of how they lived up to criteria of moral worth, one of which was Anti-Racism. Alan, the central character in 'The Humming Bird Tree', 'hasn't got the strength of character to resist the racism of his parents', Jennifer Green said. And of Alice, the white family's black cook she explained to her 4th year class:

Now that's important, because Alice's attitude is in a sense on parallel with Alan's mother and father. She is so set in her ways, so set in the traditions that white people are automatically superior, she can't or won't break out of the world. Here is a black woman shouting at black children for playing on a see-saw. Notice how she takes the white person's point of view. That's what I want you to notice, she's as traditional as are Alan's mother and father. O.K. The difference now is that Alan is trying to break out of these traditions.

(taped lesson)

Sometimes Jennifer Green used the texts to introduce discussions on questions of value or controversy. Students might be asked to speculate about why a particular character behaved as they did or to talk about what they ought to do in certain situations. On occasions like this she often related the books and the issues that they raised to aspects of her own life. She recounted, often as entertaining stories in themselves, experiences which she had had, hoping that students would do the same, so that they could share their experiences and come to a greater understanding of the texts themselves and their implications for inter-personal relationships and social commitments. Her questioning in situations like this became more open-ended and student participation increased, although she retained a fairly strong grip on the subject matter of the discussions. However, sometimes these discussions were marred by problems of classroom control and the negative attitudes of some of the students, and had to be abandoned. At other times it was Jennifer Green herself, as the most enthusiastic participant, who dominated and did most of the talking. Thus situations which were created so that students could exercise their language skills and exert a greater control over classroom knowledge sometimes ended up with Jennifer Green exercising most and retaining strong control.

The following discussion, held by Jennifer Green to be very much the sort of thing she was aiming for, illustrates the points I am making. It is necessarily a long extract, but interesting as it also shows clearly Jennifer Green's approach to Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education. Her 3rd year class, who were reading 'My Mate Shofiq', had come to the section of the book where a group of white children tell each other several racist myths about 'Pakistanis'. Jennifer Green had on this occasion the help of a 'learning support' teacher who had taken several students out of the class. She was left with 11 students - 8 Afro/Caribbean (4 boys and 4 girls), 2 white boys and 1 boy of Asian origin. After reading a section of the book she uses the opportunity to break off and begin a discussion.

JG - Again absolute nonsense, but I've taught classes where people believe things like this. Especially I remember I had, a couple of year ago, I had a very nice Chinese girl in my class, lovely girl she was, and we were reading this book and she actually got quite upset when we were reading it and she said afterwards to the class she said - 'Do you know,' she said, 'My parents have actually

been accused of that, because we're Chinese and because we run a restaurant. My parents have been accused of that. It's absolute nonsense.' So can you see how things like this can become carried away.

Can we just stop there for a minute. Can you give me some examples of the sort of...some examples, Veronica (V is chatting) of the sort of racism she is facing... Veronica can you give me sort of examples of the sort of racism which, I don't know if you can tell us this, if you feel able to...that you as a black person have met in Britain? Can you tell us of an incident when you've met racism? Sh...now listen...because it's important that Veronica has chance to speak.

VERONICA(V) - What for?

JG - Because I want us all to discuss it, it's important.

V - Ask someone else then.

GEORGE(G) - Miss, I know one.

JG - Ok, George you tell us about one, that's involving you is it?Ok, now listen if you're not mature enough to discuss it I shall stop it.

G - This guy from Birchfield Lodge.

JASON(J) - Oh I....

JG - I remember this. It's most unpleasant.

G - Miss when we were just coming out of this shop...these lot here... Guy, just come up to me and said 'You black bastard and all this crap.'

JG - Was that when we were walking along the road.

BOYS - Yeah.

G - I was in a good mood, but if I was in a bad mood (Waves his fist).

J - You'd have gone up to him and

JG - George why did you...sh...listen...Veronica...go on say it say it to all of us (to Veronica). How do you think George felt at that point?

V - I don't know.

JG - Well George how did you feel when that was said to you?

G - Miss I just felt like beating him up or something like that... but I just couldn't be bothered...

JG - That's a very very brave attitude to say don't waste you're strength. I think you're right. I think people who have that attitude are not worth wasting your strength on. Now I remember that I was walking along the road when that happened and we were...I don't know if it was the same party...but we were walking along and there was a school party coming our way, an all white school, and as I was walking along a child turned to a boy, it was a 1st year boy then he's in the 2nd year now, and just turned to him and said 'Oi you you nigger' and I just couldn't believe it. Mrs.Freeman was with me, and he walked off as quickly as he could and of course this kid was here and he was 'Let me at him, I'll teach him' and we sort of said, 'look just cool it'.

(Class laugh - they're very interested in the story) Sh...listen...calm down... and we went up to the teacher and we took the teacher on one side and said 'excuse me do you mind if we have a word with you?' and Mrs.Freeman said to her, 'I think you ought to be aware that the children in your class have got really offensive views. One of your children has just called a black child in our group a 'nigger'. And this teacher was horrified. She was absolutely shocked and she just said 'I just don't know what to say, I'm so sorry, I'm really sorry,' She said 'I'll take it up with him, who was it'. And we pointed the boy out and we said, 'we don't want a fight, we don't want trouble now, but we think you ought to have a serious word with that boy, because what he said was racist and offensive and you need to talk to him about it'. And she was extremely embarrassed and I'm sure she would have taken it up. Now I don't know about you, but me as a white person, because people know where I work, I'm always getting racist insults flung at me. Now if I'm getting it as a white person I don't know how some of you in the class feel because it sickens me. Would somebody else like to tell us about an incident they've been involved in?

(Mark puts his hand up). Yes Mark, Listen please (to class).

MARK(M) - When I was in Wales...

BEVERLEY(B) - He's already told us (sighs - the discussion begins to fragment).

JG - Yes you have. (JG takes over to keep order) Yes if you remember Mark was telling us...sh...listen...Mark was telling us that when he was in Wales he also, for no reason at all, had met racism...and I can give you an even worse example of this than what happened to you even. An ex-pupil Neville (surname) came to see me in the holidays. And he told me he went to Lake Coniston in the Lake District and he was standing on a rock and he was photographing the lake and a guy was in a sailing boat, and he's got a really good camera, Neville, and he was taking these photographs and he said he was standing there and this bloke looked up at him and said, 'Eh you nigger get back to where you came from you don't belong here'. And Neville said, 'I just froze. Nobody has ever given me racism like that before'. He said 'I'm just so grateful that I went to Milltown High and I knew in a sense that they were wrong and I was right'. He said, 'what I wanted to do was jump in the boat and punch him for all I was worth, but I just stood there and I was frozen on this rock'. So Neville said, 'Why don't you come up here and tell me that, facing me, man to man...Get out of your boat (JG shouts) and come here and say it to me', and he said, 'The bloke started going off quickly'. Then he went back to the van...He was with Mr.Holt on a camping trip. They're ex pupils and they all keep in touch; and another boy in the party said, 'Come on Neville we'll go back and we'll get him, come on we'll go together', and Neville said, 'No I don't want to I know that I'm better than that person. I know I'm educated and he isn't', and he said, 'I don't want to it'll just make him bitter.' But it was interesting because I was very upset about the racism that I encountered on my holiday and Neville was upset about this and we talked about it and we both felt better after we'd talked about it, because we could share it...

V - It's cold in here.

JG - Sh...who else wanted to say something a minute ago? George, listen...sh.

G - Miss, one day me, Paul, and Michael Ennis, Miss... we were on the em, em, Pennines, Miss went to the Pennines and we was comin' back and I was on the back seat and them lot was on the front,

PAUL(P)- Oh I,

G - And em these 2 guys was sittin in front of me and ...

JG - Hang on you were on a general bus were you?

G - Miss yeah. These 2 boys dashed the ticket and hit me so I said eh can you say you're sorry...So I went (inaudible) like that.

JG - Now why...just stop for a minute. Why did that annoy you George? Why did it annoy you?

G - Miss they're throwing tickets at me.

JG - Not just because of the tickets. What did he do then that was wrong? What did he call you?

J - Calling him a B....

JG - Right, and that was wrong because that is a very good example of racism isn't it, because that's how it works.

G - Miss

JG - Go on,

G - So then, wait. So they then said, so they said, 'who are you talkin' to?' I just said, 'so you want a fight? I don't want a fight'. So I just went to the front and they called me a chicken and I just sat down with the rest and they were just comin' down. So we were going to come off as well. So then, so I think by the time they got on the stairs... as soon as they got out the door they just run, run around the corner and started shouting.

JG - It's usually...because like Neville that guy was safe to say that from his boat wasn't he, safe to call Neville names as long as he didn't have to come face to face and face the reality of what he was saying, but sh...listen, Ann-Marie do you want to tell us...we all share this.

J - Oh yeah Miss...

JG - Hang on, Ann-Marie first, then Jason, Ann-Marie.

ANN-MARIE(AM) - When we first moved down and we were living in (name) these white man, right, about 16, right, and me mum was going out and she came back in, right. This was in the night about 10 o'clock. She was comin' in and they'd thrown chip papers in our garden and everything and beer cans. So me mum went, 'You'd best pick them up right now'. So they started callin' her 'black bastard' and all of this and 'get out of the country', and me mum went in the house and came out (laughs) with a baseball bat.

JG - I can believe your mum would as well (laughs).

AM - And then after that, right...one who started callin' her black bastard me mum and him just don't talk.

JG - They just don't talk, (the girls laugh about the baseball bat).

J - Miss,

JG - But why isn't it...you see I always, wait a minute... sh... Jason (much talking breaks out - JG settles them down) Jason come on... sh...

J - Miss did you hear that thing just last night about that white lad, who stabbed a Paki to death - a Pakistani,

JG - Yes - (Numerous bids to speak). Wait a minute, wait a minute...one at a time please...sh...Arslam please tell us,

ARSLAM(A) - Miss, he had a fight the day before yesterday and the Pakistani guy won,

JG - Where was the fight?

A - (Name) School,

JG - That was in (Name) school listen...Sh...Beverley...listen,

A - Miss, right the white guy said to the Pakistani guy do you want a fight and the Pakistani guy said all right,

JG - So it was planned was it that the fight would go on?

A - Yeah, but Miss when the Pakistani guy came back the white guy pulled out a knife and stabbed him,

JG - Now that is a good example of what racism can lead to. If we as teachers...listen (JG raises her voice above the rising class talk), I mean politicians in this country...sh...If teachers and politicians in this country and us as people don't stand together, because whether you are Chinese, or whatever you class yourself as black, brown, yellow it doesn't matter...listen

Beverley...sh...we've all, you've all in particular...How many... because its not so bad because I'm white I don't have to experience it first hand. And do you know sometimes I feel very ashamed about that, very ashamed,

J - Miss? (Beverley is talking)

JG - Beverley when I was on holiday this time I met a teacher, a head teacher of a school in Birmingham and this bloke had been very nice to my children and we were in the bar one evening and we were just talking over a drink. And he said to me, 'Where do you teach?' And I said, 'I teach in Milltown', 'Whereabouts?', and I said, 'Oh just, out of the centre of Milltown in Chesham', and he said, 'Oow', he said, 'that's like Handsworth isn't it?' He's a head teacher in Birmingham. And I said, 'I suppose it is if you want to draw parallels', and he said, 'Do you know, for me, you could put every coloured person, stick em in a boat float em out to sea and drown the bloody lot of them'. And I was just...

B - Shocked (Beverley mimics making fun of JG) (girls laugh),

JG - Well how would you have handled it Beverley? (Numerous bids to speak and talking amongst themselves). I'm interested, how would you Beverley, what would you have done if you'd been me?

AM - She wouldn't bother you know.

JG - Veronica (many students now talking at once), Wait a minute...listen...one at a time. This is a good discussion, Veronica you say I should throw my (inaudible) away now, Beverley what would you have done?

B - Me? (inaudible),

JG - Listen,

AM - I'd knock him down,

JG - Wait a minute, wait a minute (over student talk) Listen Beverley what do you think I should have done?

AM - Miss, you'd better not talk to Beverley,

BOY - (inaudible)

JG - Oh no if I'd have been black he wouldn't have said anything... (inaudible), he wouldn't have been there,

J - He wouldn't have been near you miss. (Girls laugh and discussion gets very disorderly),

JG - I must admit what actually happened was my mouth sort of hit the floor and then he said, and then he went on to say, 'It's like these women', he said, 'you women', he said, 'you want it all', he said, 'and I got a piece of paper'. And then he got on to his bandwagon, Then he said, 'and I had a case recently, I had a girl', he said, '8 months pregnant she was when she came for a job and I've got it in writing that I can't discriminate against anyone for sex, colour or creed and,' he said, 'and she took me to the Equal Opportunities Commission'. Because he didn't give her the job because she was pregnant and, in fact, I did have quite a fierce row with him. What do you think I should have done?...because you had a different reaction...sh...why do you think, do you think I should have thrown my drink in his face?

MARK - Yes you should have given him a upper cut in his eyebrow (they all laugh),

JG - Jason sh...what do you think I should have done?

J - Don't know really,

BOY - Walked off,

J - I would have walked off,

JG - But if I'd walked off,

AM - I'd have walked off come back again and boxed him down,

J - I'd have walked off dead cool and just left him to talk to himself,

JG - You don't

J - You'd have had an argument about racism,

JG - Well I did actually. We did actually get into a very fierce argument,

AM - George is (inaudible) (class laughs),

G - (inaudible)

JG - George come on, battering him is not an answer really because what I had to do and I couldn't do it because he was an out and out racist, but what I had to do was somehow change his attitude. That's what I felt. The problem is he is a head teacher in a Birmingham school which is supposed to have an anti-racist policy and presumably he (inaudible) his children.

BOY - (inaudible)

JG - Well exactly. George go on.

G - Miss if I was you and he said that to me I would do this. If I knew a black person who was black and they're nearby I'd just walk up to he guy and say can you just wait there for a second....

JG - But is that fair because I'm just making their lives worse.

G - Now... (Several students shout out at once)

G - But he's the one who started it he should...I'd just go round and get my friend and say you know what this guy called, said - em, (several students talk at once).

JG - Wait a minute...sh...sh...

J - Then just stand behind him when he's just talking.

JG - Beverley please.

AM - And then just tap him behind on the shoulder.

J - I'd do that miss. Say it was Paul here right, I'd say it was that big man. Put him right behind him.

JG - But what if he isn't, it isn't always the answer to hit is it.

J - It is if he's racist (several bids to speak from the boys).

JG - What I actually did...

AM - Look how would you like it...(Several students talk at once).

JG - Well done Ann-Marie (discussion fragments, several inaudible comments).

JG - Beverley can you listen.

B - Ann-Marie said it to me, Ann-Marie what did you say.

JG - What did you say? Go on.

AM -(laughs)

J - How would you like it if you were black.

JG - Go on. (inaudible)

JASON - Oh yeah, I forgot about that (discussion here becomes very fragmented and impossible to transcribe).

JG - (over the students)I'll tell you what actually happened. What actually happened was. (the students continue their talking and laughing).

JG - No (shouting) you're spoiling it. Hey look. You're all...

B - (shouting) Lets read now.

G - No don't read.

J - We haven't got enough of them.

JG - (loosing control) Listen please, The point I'm making is...(Mark shouts),

JG - Mark listen, listen...(they settle) The point I'm making is that it doesn't matter if your're Chinese, Pakistani, Indian, African, (Beverley talks behind this) Jamaican...please...Trinidadian, Barbadian, whatever, if...It doesn't matter, if you are black in this country then you can easily nearly everyday in your life come up against that sort of racism.

MARK - Miss,

JG - (ignores him) and you as a group of people have got to stand together against it.

J - Miss...(inaudible) remember when we were in first year? Right Miss, and we were in the haystack and we were takin' photographs, Miss are you listening?

JG - Yes I am, (her attention is elsewhere as chatting continues in the group),

J - Taking photographs, right, and the farmer come, Miss right, and there was George and Steven Gordon and Peter Ennis and they were all black Miss, and there was only one David Godiff and he was white, and I was up in the haystack (girls giggling) and I just hid in the hay and they just ran off and the guy come running out and he had one of them big forks and he started shouting, 'Get the black things and everything'.

JG - Yes racism again, How did you... (Knock on door).

At this point the discussion was interrupted by another teacher who teaches across the corridor. She was having problems with a student who had been badly behaved and had refused to leave her class. Jennifer Green left the class to assist and unfortunately the discussion came to an end. As she returned the bell went for the end of the lesson and she dismissed the class for lunch.

We can see clearly in this extract how Jennifer Green tried to transmit the value of Anti-Racism. Using examples from her own experience she showed how racism can manifest itself in everyday life. She also encouraged students to talk about their own experiences. Some did, others found it difficult. They either lacked appropriate experiences or did not really see the point in 'sharing' them or they did not want to get involved. On several occasions the discussion fragmented as students drifted off into their own conversations or started to 'mess about', or inter-student animosities intervened, and Jennifer Green began to lose control. One method she used to bring student attention back to the public arena and re-establish her control over participation and subject matter was to tell a good attention-grabbing story which she did to good effect on several occasions. This, combined with her passionate concern that the students got the appropriate message, meant she dominated the

discussion. Not completely, of course, the students here were far more actively involved than in other lessons, but she played the major role and it was her concerns that dictated its flow and content. Student participation was limited to a few vocal ones and their control of the discussion was weak.

In one part of the discussion George, although he introduced the example as an instance of racism, was more concerned about the fact that the other children on the bus threw tickets at him rather than calling him 'black'. Mild racial abuse like this was common, even acceptable in some circumstances, in the peer culture to which students belonged. Sometimes the concerns of teachers about racism was regarded by students as rather eccentric, a view point that frequently arose in my interviews with students. As students of 13/14 living in an area with a large and well established ethnic minority population, going to schools where ethnic minority students were in the majority they did not often experience the extremes of racism. They were to some extent 'cloistered', as one teacher put it. They had not yet experienced the racism of the labour market and were not always old enough to appreciate the subtleties of racism. Interestingly, while Jennifer Green attempted to get students to discuss the appropriate way of combatting the racism that she experienced with the Birmingham head teacher some of the students used this as an opportunity to fantasize about a fight situation, the sort of situation which characterised their peer group play. This is not to denigrate the attempt of Jennifer Green to engage students in an active role in a discussion of an important issue, but merely to point out some of the difficulties that she had in attempting to realise her aim, and some of the strategies which students of this age use to make classroom talk their own.

On other occasions in lessons I observed Jennifer Green had rather less success in promoting discussion. Her 3rd year group in the previous year with whom I spent four lessons were particularly unforthcoming. On one occasion after reading a section in 'The Friends' where the central character's mother dies and recounting one of her own experiences with a death, she tried to get the class to talk about the situation. Despite her efforts, and to her great disappointment, the students failed to respond. In another lesson she read an extract from a novel 'Go Well Stay Well' by Toeckey Jones which is set in South Africa in the 1970s and is about the relationship between two girls, one rich and white, the other poor and black. She attempted to lead a discussion on the problems of South Africa, but the students, both Afro/Caribbean and

white, rejected the topic as 'boring' and 'irrelevant'. As one rather awkward Afro/Caribbean boy said rather arrogantly and dismissively: 'What do I need to know about South Africa. I don't live there do I. What they do there is up to them.' Jennifer Green left the lesson frustrated and despondent at the students' apathy and lack of concern.

Sometimes control problems forced Jennifer Green to cut short, abandon or even not attempt at all discussions of the sort she wanted. The interactive pedagogy of her ideals was difficult to realise. With 3JG, for example, lessons were frequently marred by the noisy, awkward and challenging behaviour of the students who often sought to redefine classroom situations in order to make physical and social space for their own interests and concerns which often involved 'having a laugh or a mess about'. These students were particularly adept in their 'counter strategies' (c.f. Beynon 1985) as I found to my cost when I once stood in for Jennifer Green. In fact Jennifer Green was very skillful in 'countering' their counter strategies and her lessons were much more orderly and controlled than many I observed. But she was often forced into styles of teaching and interactions with student that she found distasteful and frustrating. She came into the staffroom on one occasion and said 'God I'm so fed up with that group (3JG), you have to impose your discipline on them all the time. You can't trust them to do anything'. In one lesson with this group I made the following field notes:

(The boys arrive rather noisily. Stephen and Jason continue their game of tic in the classroom, climbing onto the chairs to avoid being 'on'. Several shout and noisily sit down. Neil goes to the lockers and starts looking for his book)

JG - Right can you take your coats off.

(Beverley wanders in then out again when she realises none of the other girls are present. George shouts - Miss, Miss repeatedly at the top of his voice. The girls arrive 6 minutes after the lesson should have started. Desks and chairs clatter as students take their coats off and sit down. JG stands looking displeased at the front of the class. She waits and the class gradually quieten)

JG - I'm still waiting for everyone to face the front.

GEORGE(G) - Miss can I talk?

JG - At last, That's better, much better, That's what I expect, I don't want to have to shout. Now listen because I'm going to give you instructions for the lesson, George we'll talk about that later. We're not talking about trips now. Today I want you to keep to the targets we talked about. Some of you are not sticking to them.

BEVERLY(B) - Who me? (aggressively) What you looking at me for?

JG - I want a silent working lesson today. We don't have many.

B - (sarcastically) We don't have any!

JG - Well we are today.

ANN-MARIE(AM) - (jokingly) If it kills me.

(JG gives instructions for the lesson, ignoring George's repeated request that they talk about organising a trip on bikes. Jason gives out the books, George the rulers. George starts fighting with the girls over the rulers. Mark arrives 8 minutes late, but JG is too busy to comment. The girls squeal.)

JG - George give out the rulers don't fight with them.

(several noisy conversations start)

JG - Right! Neil quiet please.

B - Miss, what are we going to do today?

JG - Beverly I've just told you, (she shouts - the noise is increasing) It was the same yesterday.

Now just be quiet. We have the comprehension to finish. Look the next person to speak I will separate. Will you all listen to my instructions

(she repeats again what she wants them to do, Beverly protests)

JG - (emphatically) Beverly move.

B - No.

JG - Beverly do as I say.

B - I ain't doin' no work.

(JG ignores her. She moves reluctantly. She explains again what they have to do. If they do not finish, she says they will have to take it home for home work)

JG - Right. No talking. (the talking continues - JG shouts) No talking! I mean it! (the girls protest and continue to mess about. JG threatens to separate them. They quieten down)

JG - (surveying the class) Now the only person I can see who is not working is Veronica. Make a start Craig.

CRAIG(C) - I've finished the comprehension.

JG - Then finish off the writing on 'My Best Day'

G - My fingers swelled up and is hurting.

(JG inspects it and tells him if its still hurting at the end of the lesson then to tell her. AM gets up and starts wandering around. She and Beverly start messing and laughing)

JG - Sit down! I mean it. Work in silence!

G - can I open a window? (he gets up and climbs on his chair opening all the small windows. AM protests saying its cold. JG ignores her)

(JG notices that Veronica has no book)

JG - You've forgotten your book again, You promised me yesterday, I'll see you at the end of the lesson, You've got to get organised it's your responsibility.

B - (mimicking) It's your responsibility.

JG - (shouts) Get on!

(Mark hides under his coat doing nothing, Most now start work 20 minutes after the start of the lesson, A few minutes later the messing starts again from the girls)

JG - (shouting) Right we'll have quiet please.

B - (cheekily) For the second time.

JG - And I hope for the last time.

(George pulls a face at Beverly, Beverly makes some comment about George being a 'breed' i.e. half caste)

JG - (shouting) Look that sort of comment undermines everything we're trying to do in this novel, I think it's racist and offensive, I'll see you at the end of the lesson.

(The girls continue to laugh, mess about and be as cheeky as possible, JG glares at AM)

AM - I'm stuck (she shouts it as if to say, 'what you looking at me for')

(The lesson continued like this, 25 minutes after the beginning of the lesson I wrote the following summary in my field notes - Most of JG's 'work' so far has been dealing with equipment, lost books, explaining instructions several times and with disciplinary incidents, especially dealing with disciplinary incidents. Whenever she tries to help someone with their work there is another incident causing her to stop and glare or shout at someone. She's just keeping control, but only just. It must be impossible for a student to concentrate and it's impossible for JG to help/teach anyone other than just respond to simple requests. Most of the problems are coming from the girls who seem to be determined to be as bolshy and awkward as possible. They seem particularly adept at responding to JG's rebukes with cheeky remarks, verbal aggression and refusals to move or cooperate. It's a battle for control which JG is trying to contain in the classroom)

(To make matters worse a few minutes later Jason, a white boy, using the situation as an opportunity to mess around with his pen, flicks it and it accidentally hits George in the face, Jason and Stephen, an Afro/Caribbean boy, laugh. George, angered by the previous skirmish with Beverly, is unable to control his temper, flies off the handle and stands up, pushing his desk noisily forward, shouting, 'Why did you do that you black bastard!'. He sweeps his books off his desk, picks up his jacket, storms round to the front of the class, kicks the bin over, the contents of which go flying across the room. He flings the door open so it bangs against the wall and runs out, slamming the door behind him. There is a stunned silence, broken only by the sniggering of the girls. JG follows George out and shouts 'George' appealingly, but he has run off.

Fortunately he returned before the end of the lesson and JG was able to talk to him about what happened and why. George calmed down and helped JG clear up the room, whilst JG accepted that his outburst was understandable given the provocation.)

These notes illustrate how sometimes classroom interaction at Milltown High could be dominated by problems of control even for experienced teachers like Jennifer Green. As she said after the lesson - 'It was just a matter of control I couldn't do any teaching. It was awful. Those kids are just not being stretched. The last few lessons have just been a waste of time. What do you do?' She went on to say that one of the most frustrating things about teaching at Milltown High was that as a teacher you were very restricted in what you could do in lessons by the 'behaviour and attitudes of the kids'. The students, she explained, just had not got the self discipline or motivation to be able to cope with a system which gave them a large amount of freedom to control and direct their own learning or which was based predominantly on group work and activities. David Benyon did not fully appreciate the difficulties, pressures and constraints on teaching at Milltown High, 'the niggly arguments and day-in, day-out confrontations that build up and build up and the frustration at not having the resources to be able to tackle problems effectively'. So that, although Jennifer Green supported David Benyon's overall philosophy, she felt some of his ideas on pedagogy were remote and impractical. 'All the pressures', she said, 'force you to compromise. I have to adopt a style of teaching which I think is the best, most efficient style for Milltown High, and that means a tight structure and a tight organisation and me most of the time at the centre of things controlling what goes on. It might not be ideal but it works for me.'

However, problems of discipline, control and student attitude were not the only constraints on the introduction of a more interactive pedagogy. Another pressure became evident when I observed a small number of lessons with Jennifer Green's top set 4th year who were preparing for a GCSE literature assignment on 'The Hummingbird Tree'. Jennifer Green at this time knew that she would be leaving the school at the end of the term and was concerned that the students should complete several major assignments for their course work so that they would be off to a good start. She was also concerned that the class understood and appreciated the quite complex social context of the story and the message that the author was attempting to get across.

Her teaching in these lessons was extremely didactic consisting of readings from the text interspersed with brief lectures in which she transmitted her interpretation of the novel. Questions directed at students were mainly intended to elicit agreement with her interpretation and to check understanding rather than to encourage discussion or the articulation of alternative views. She did not attempt to engage students in any collaborative or group discussions in which their interpretations or alternative interpretations of the novel might have emerged. Interestingly, whilst Jennifer Green on several occasions related her own experiences to the text, students were given no opportunities to do this publicly themselves. Their 'action knowledge', as Barnes (1976) terms it, was not called into play, and students were not given the opportunity to exercise an active or critical role.

An extract from one of these lessons illustrates the form that they took. The class had just read part of the story concerning an argument between Alan, a rich white boy, and his mother about whether Kaiser and Jaillin, the Asian servants Alan has befriended, should come to his birthday party.

JG - (stopping reading) Now that's an open example of racism, isn't it because why didn't she want them to come to the party?

STUDENT- (inaudible)

JG - Sorry, Come on why didn't she want them to come to the party?

STUDENT - Because they're servants.

JG - Because, yes I suppose in a way Dawn you're right. Yes, because she regards them as slaves, yes, servants, and also (JG's emphasis) because they're black and because other white children will be there and of course that would be unheard of, Black children don't go to white children's parties,

Notice also the extravagant food. Also interesting here, and I want you to note this, is Alan's reaction. So do you want to jot this down, Alan defends Kaiser and Jaillin. This is what the book is all about. Him trying to break out of this world of racism. Whether or not he's going to achieve it you've got to wait and see. But he is certainly trying. He argues with his mother here doesn't he. He cannot understand why Kaiser and Jaillin can't come. They're his closest friends. So it's important because it's his first challenge, if you like, of the set ways, the set procedures. Jot that down quickly. (she dictates) Alan challenges the set procedures, the norms.

(JG continues reading the story. A few minutes later she breaks off again)

JG - (quoting from the book) 'I'd known from the beginning that mother wouldn't allow Kaiser and Jaillin to the party.' Very important that line. Underline it. He'd known before he asked her so why did he ask? That's the important thing. And the answer is simple. Go on why did he ask?

STUDENT - To test them.

JG - Good, well done Shaun, (to class) Do you want to write that down, He had to test them, Well done Shaun.

(JG carries on reading, then breaks again)

JG - (quoting from the book) 'Had she said yes', and I want you to underline this because it's all important. 'Had she said yes, I would have been astonished. A little frightened.' Now that is important, because what he's saying is although he's challenged her, he's challenged her very safely, hasn't he. Why?

STUDENT - He knew she'd say no

JG - Good. He knew she'd say no. So really there wasn't any challenge being made. It's, to me it's just as if Allan is just beginning to solve his conscience a bit. But he's doing it very safely and this is what makes Ian MacDonald such a good writer because I think he's gone right into this boy. Whether this boy is Ian MacDonald himself I don't know I'm trying to get somebody to give you a talk who knows Ian MacDonald. Certainly he knows the subtlety of racism and the way it twists a person. (taped lesson)

The experience of reading and interpreting the novel was heavily 'framed' (Bernstein 1971) by Jennifer Green. Moreover, she presented a view of the novel - 'This is what the book is all about. Him trying to break out of this world of racism' - and of the motivation of some of the characters - 'it's just as if Alan is beginning to solve his conscience a bit' - which could be open to dispute (see Gordon Rohlehr in the introduction to the 1974 Caribbean Writers' edition). My main point, however, is that the pedagogy adopted made the emergence of alternative interpretations unlikely. Students were not given the

chance to participate in the negotiation of meaning and denied the opportunity of an active role.

In the concluding lesson Jennifer Green gave out the title of the students' assignment and then went over the two chapters of the novel telling the students what they should put in their answers. Whilst there was room for some student interpretations to be included the framework of the assignment was closely structured. What Jennifer Green wanted was clearly defined. In these lessons then an interactive pedagogy of the type espoused by the English teachers was not employed. The main reason here appears to have been not the problems of classroom control. Indeed, this group presented less problems in that sense than almost any other class that I saw at Milltown High. It appears to have been a concern that the group 'get through the work' in order that they would have enough course work available for assessment. Although continuous assessment is often introduced to free the teacher from the constraints of a traditional examination it seems that it may contain constraints of its own (c.f. Hammersley and Scarth 1986).

However, to suggest that such a style was completely dominant in Jennifer Green's lessons would be highly misleading. We have already seen how she often tried to develop discussions from the texts that she read. These discussions were sometimes genuinely open-ended, exploratory and gave the opportunity for students to use their own experiences and knowledge and to debate issues. But although she espoused a commitment to the use of small group work, which might have provided the opportunity for more student involvement, there were only three lessons I observed where she actually used such a method for part of the lesson. These were often occasions when she had managed to get the assistance of an extra teacher or student teacher.

In one such lesson her 4th year group in the 1985/6 year had been reading the novel 'Rainbows of the Gutter' by Rukshana Smith. They had come to a section which dealt with a young Afro/Caribbean boy's feelings about his schooling. Unfortunately I was unable to observe all of the lesson, but when I arrived Jennifer Green had split the class into two groups of about 6/7 students one with a student teacher and one with a learning support teacher. They had been asked to discuss the question - 'It is not enough that schools in inner city areas have Multicultural Education. Multicultural Education should also be important in all white schools.' - in preparation for writing an assignment for their English Language course work. I was unable to record the

discussions but they were relatively free-ranging and students played the main roles. Nearly all the students had a chance to participate and appeared to genuinely explore the meaning of racism, their experiences of it and what they felt schools ought to be doing about it. The teachers played roles which were more akin to Stenhouse's idea of the teacher as neutral chairperson (see Schools Council Publications 1970), facilitating and guiding the discussion rather than playing a dominant part. Jennifer Green visited groups, listened to ideas and views and asked for elaboration and clarification. At times the discussion became quite animated as students negotiated their ideas and interpretations. They were nearly all actively involved.

In the lessons following the discussion students wrote up their thoughts in the form of a persuasive piece of writing - a letter to a headteacher of an all white school about why the school should adopt a policy of Multicultural Education. However, although the students were actively involved in classroom discussion the topic set tended to discourage consideration of an alternative view that Multicultural Education was not appropriate. This idea was in fact discussed amongst the students in their groups and rejected, but Jennifer Green did little to encourage its expression or elaboration. The agenda or framework of the discussion, which derived from Jennifer Green's commitment to Multicultural Education, was a strong influence over the arguments which were presented.

To summarise, Jennifer Green's Anti-Racism was part of her strong commitment to the school, its students and to English teaching. She devoted great energy to her teaching and to developing positive relationships with students and their parents. She had been instrumental in creating an English curriculum which presented students with a strong Anti-Racist ethos. However, in the lessons I observed, her commitment to an interactive pedagogy based on discussion and more egalitarian teacher/student relationships, whilst realised on some occasions, was often modified in practice in order to manage the problems created by classroom control, student attitudes, volume of work and assessment procedures. Moreover, sometimes her own enthusiasm and concern to ensure that students received the messages that she thought were important meant that their ideas played a more secondary role than she ideally wanted and alternative viewpoints remained unexplored.

Alison Mitchell

As with the other English teachers Alison Mitchell displayed a strong commitment to the school and to the students. She said in one interview that she found Milltown High a stimulating and exciting place to work and although she sometimes craved a quieter life she would not really want to work in another type of school. Like Jennifer Green she devoted a lot of time to the school. She often worked late, sometimes not leaving the school until 5 or 5.30. She had special responsibility for the school library and she spent many extra hours working on its administration, ordering new books, visiting book fairs, and reviewing its stock. She was especially concerned that the library contained books which projected positive images of ethnic minority groups and the cultural backgrounds of the students that attended Milltown High, and that any material which was racist should be removed. This formed a substantial part of her work.

She was pragmatic and down-to-earth and found it difficult to espouse her theoretical ideals, because, as she said, 'they often don't relate to the realities of classroom life at Milltown High'. She spoke of the many times at weekends that she made great plans for her classes only to abandon them as soon as she faced the classes on Monday morning. Having entered teaching late she was relatively inexperienced. This showed in a lack of confidence about her own ideas and in a feeling of inadequacy and uncertainty regarding classroom organisation and discipline. However, she believed that as time wore on, and she became more established, many of her problems were easing.

She was sceptical about some of the priorities in the department, arguing that 'perhaps we should forget all this radical bit, all our Anti-Racism and Anti-Sexism, and just get down to pushing the kids for exams'. She also questioned the department's commitment to mixed ability teaching suggesting that as resources were inadequate and teaching strategies ill-thought out, then some form of banding might be more practical.

Her pragmatism came across in her no-nonsense approach to the students. Whilst sometimes seeking to be informal and approachable and to build up personal relationships, she recognised that some of the students would 'run rings around you if you let them', and therefore she felt a teacher had to be firm, formal and detached. She found it difficult to preserve a positive view of some of her students, who could be aggressive, awkward and difficult to

handle, and occasionally she revealed her impatience and frustration by lapsing into an aloof sarcasm in the classroom. Sometimes, too, an air of resignation crept in. She felt ground down, finding it difficult to generate Jennifer Green's enthusiasm and energy.

Alison Mitchell advocated a pragmatic approach to pedagogy. Ideally she wanted more discussion, more group work, more student participation and to get away from 'me at the centre of things doling it out', but in practice she found it hard to move in this direction. As with Jennifer Green the constraints of classroom discipline and control, and with 4th and 5th years pressure to get students to complete work for assessment, loomed high. So much so that what happened in her classroom, at least when I observed, appeared very different from the sort of interactive discussion-based pedagogy that the English teachers valued. Alison Mitchell argued that in order to cope with the difficulties of classroom life at Milltown High it was necessary to accept this gap between ideals and reality.

So, what was the reality of classroom life for Alison Mitchell? What did her pragmatic approach look like in the classroom? I observed her teaching 32 lessons in all. 19 of these lessons were with a mixed ability 3rd year group and 13 with her top set 4th year. However, my observation was when the teachers' industrial action was at its height. On several occasions her scheduled classes did not take place because the students had been sent home earlier in the day, and sometimes classes were drastically reduced in size. This caused Alison Mitchell great problems in terms of planning as she often did not know if a lesson would take place or if the same group of students that had been in the one lesson would be in the next. With her 4th year exam group she was extremely concerned that the students were falling behind in their assessment work.

As with the other English teachers she generally organised her work around literature. She decided which literature, although sometimes she gave classes a choice of which book they would read together. She adopted a whole class teaching approach spending a considerable amount of time on reading novels and short stories aloud to the class, believing, as did Jennifer Green, that such an approach meant the whole class could join in the collective exercise of reading and analysing the text. 11 of the 32 lessons I observed were devoted to this activity. After reading to the class students were, usually after some discussion, set individual written work based on some

aspect of the text. This would generally be a set of comprehension questions or a creative writing assignment. For example, in one lesson I observed with the 3rd years after reading part of the book 'Friedrich' by Hans Peter Richter the class were told to write an empathetic piece imagining that they were friends of the Jewish boy, Friedrich, writing a letter describing what had happened to the boy and their personal feelings about it. The 4th years, after reading two short stories with 'twists in the tail', were asked to write their own story with a 'twist in the tail'. Alison Mitchell hoped that students would develop their writing skills by drafting their work, having it marked and rewriting. In this sense she could orientate language work to the specific problems of individuals in the mixed ability class.

But with her 3rd year class Alison Mitchell on several occasions set the whole group a rather mechanical grammar exercise of the sort that Jennifer Green frowned on. She argued that this was sometimes necessary in order to 'settle them down' or 'preserve my sanity'. She used lessons like this as fill ins or to get a quiet life if she was feeling under the weather. She also believed that because the students at Milltown High found creative work difficult and were sometimes, difficult to motivate, that it was necessary to provide them with a 'structure' for a piece of written work. So she often wrote down on the blackboard or dictated a plan for the sort writing that she wanted them to produce. In one lesson with her 4th years, for example, she spent the whole lesson dictating and going over a plan for their short story, outlining how they could organise their work. Students compliantly copied down her notes, occasionally breaking from the rather mechanical task for bouts of chatting and socialising which served to delay and prolong the work. In lessons like this students played passive roles as consumers of Alison Mitchell's prescribed structure.

Her choice of literature derived from the same criteria of 'relevance' and 'raising of issues' used by the other teachers. In the lessons I observed her 3rd year class read 'Friedrich' and 'My Mate Shofiq' and her 4th years read 'To Kill a Mockin Bird', two short stories, one by Roald Dahl called 'Lamb to the Slaughter', the other by Jan Carew, set in Guyana, and called 'The Hunters and the Hunted', and two poems, one by Tony Connor, the other by Lynton Kwesi Johnson. Alison Mitchell tended to read the stories or poems to the class herself. While on occasions she got students to read she often found that this created disruption as students lost concentration or used the opportunities to

mess about. Her reading was a means of keeping the story going, keeping the students' interest from flagging, thereby avoiding trouble. What tended to happen was that some students would, while in theory being expected to follow the story in their copy of the book, sit and listen like young children being read to. This also happened in Jennifer Green's classes, but she seems to have been less willing to tolerate it. Alison Mitchell was less confident reading Afro/Caribbean dialect and when she used such work she would ask a student to volunteer or, as with the Lynton Kwesi Johnson poem, use a tape recorder.

She was also less willing to break off the readings in the way that Jennifer Green did. Whilst she often provided a summary of the story so far at the beginning and end of each reading lesson she tended to let the reading go ahead with the minimum of interruption so that students could get into the story. Stopping in the middle of chapters for a discussion when students were settled and listening often created problems as students lost concentration and began to mess about. She did, however, attempt to explain to students the historical and social context of the literature. So when reading 'Friedrich' she went into the history of Nazism in pre-war Germany, and when reading 'To Kill a Mockin Bird' she described the position of black people in the United States in the 1930s and the political situation during the 1960s when the book was written.

But Alison Mitchell drew less attention directly to the characters in the books than did Jennifer Green. This may, of course, have been because the literature that she was using was different, but, while she was concerned that the students 'got the message' and therefore spent time spelling out the plot and what the author was trying to convey, she tended to allow the characters to stand as they were rather than to make moral points about them. The stories themselves, she hoped, would convey their own message.

She did, however, attempt to raise the consciousness of students by teaching them certain sociological concepts. When her 3rd year group were reading 'My Mate Shofiq' she tried to teach them about the idea of stereotypes. She produced a work sheet which explained what was meant by the concept. In the lesson she read the worksheet to the students and then asked them to do an exercise in which they related stereotypical characteristics of various national and ethnic groups which she had written on the work sheet to the titles of the groups themselves that she had put on the blackboard. She wanted to use the exercise to point out to the class how much of peoples' thinking

about other groups is based on preconceived images derived from the media. However, several of the students used this as an opportunity to shout out and make jokes. Others were puzzled by the task. One girl declared that she didn't know what Japanese people were like, a boy said he did not link people like that anyway. The class became extremely restless and Alison Mitchell had to shout to restore order.

Following the exercise she led a short, rather chaotic discussion and then asked the students to continue with her work sheet. They first had to use their imagination to write an account of how they thought certain types of people (punks, skinheads, businessmen, pensioners, housewives and vicars were among the list of suggestions) would spend their time. But many of them found it difficult to relate an imaginative writing exercise to the concept of stereotyping, and appeared to treat it as a separate and unrelated task. They then had to think about the ways in which different groups of people were portrayed in the media, and finally to go through a section of 'My Mate Shofiq' picking out statements about 'Pakistani' people that were based on fact from those that were based on stereotypes. The worksheet was intended to extend their understanding of the idea of stereotype and also to provide enough work to occupy those who worked quickly. It certainly provided plenty of work as most of the class had not finished even after the next lesson, but whether Alison Green succeeded in her aim of transmitting an understanding of the idea of stereotyping must be open to doubt as many of the students seemed unable to relate it to their own view of the world and regarded the worksheet as a rather incomprehensible chore. The whole lesson was marred by discipline problems that frequently bedevilled Alison Mitchell's lessons. Students messed about, shouted out and interrupted the class discussion, chatted about anything but the topic and many appeared to do very little work. They seemed unimpressed with Alison Mitchell's attempts to enlighten them.

In fact many of the lessons that I observed were dominated by problems of classroom control. This was true of some of Jennifer Green's lessons, but in Alison Mitchell's the problems were more severe. This may, of course have been because she was teaching different classes, but her lack of experience meant that she did find classroom management more difficult. As with most teachers at Milltown High this problem was most marked at the beginning of lessons. Students would often come in from the corridors excited and noisy. They often challenged the sanctity of the classroom by continuing corridor talk and socialising in the classroom despite signals from Alison Mitchell to 'settle down'. It was hard to 'mobilise' their attention (Hammersley 1980) as teacher cues were often ignored. Even when lessons had begun there would frequently be interruptions as students arrived late, asked to borrow pens or pencils, shouted out during class discussions or teacher talk, asked stupid questions pretending they did not know what to do, made noises, got up and wandered^{around} the room, broke off what they were doing to chat to friends and call across the room, and became involved in arguments with each other and with Alison Green. In fact some of the students had a wide repertoire of activities which often successfully transformed parts of a lesson into 'a good mess about and a laugh' as one of Alison Green's students put it (c.f. Beynon 1985). Students often exploited Alison Mitchell's slightly hesitant and disorganised teaching style which thus compounded her difficulties.

Her problems were particularly marked when she tried class discussions. I did not see any lessons which consisted completely of discussion work. Alison Mitchell believed that the students could not sustain this type of working for long, so, as with Jennifer Green, she usually tried to organise a discussion following a reading session. They were generally whole class affairs centred upon and dominated by the teacher, a mixture of teacher exposition and questions directed to and answers received from the students, Alison Green attempting to ensure that participation occurred through her. Situations like this with a relatively large number of students engaging in public, semi-formal talk, however, meant that classroom order was vulnerable to disruption by the minority of students who wished to 'have a laugh', and often discussions had to be abandoned or, as we saw in Jennifer Green's classes, the teacher ended up playing the dominant role. In the following example Alison

Mitchell has just read the class part of 'My Mate Shofiq' and attempts to begin a discussion about racist myths.

AM - There's 10 minutes left, I'm not carrying on with the story, I just want us to talk about it,

(AM pauses, Carl taps on his desk with his fingers, AM glares at him)

AM - Be quiet, listen, you've been very good while the story's been read. Now don't spoil things now (Carl carries on tapping) Right, Bernard's met up with his gang and basically what's happened, what do the gang think about what he's done? (pause she glares at Carl again) Come on you've been reading it, what's the gang's reaction to what's happened?

STUDENT(ST) - Miss sly and (inaudible)

AM - Yeah, they're not very interested. But the other side of it is, What do they want to know? (two girls come into the classroom) Just sit down please. What do they want to know about? (Carl's tapping starts again) Come on they want to know about Shofiq don't they?

ST - Yeah (much shuffling of chairs)

AM - But at the same time they want to tell Bernard all the things that they think they know about Pakistani people, don't they? (Carl's tapping becomes drumming on his desk) And what do they come out with? (a student groans loudly, someone else laughs)

MOONA(M) - bad things

AM - They come out with bad things. What is it (the drumming continues, AM glares again at Carl) Do you think the things they're coming out with are actually based on truth? Things they actually know about?

ST - No Miss they...

AM - (interrupting to make her point) They're things they've heard other people say, aren't they. They've heard their Dad say it, their Mum say it. Someone's Dad works with Pakistanis and can vouch for the fact that all the ever do is eat green rice pudding and cold cream rice (the drumming continues and shuffling of chairs gets louder) and that Pakistani men sit in the toilets all day saying prayers

(AM continues in this way dismissing the racist myths that the children told in the story, meanwhile the students get increasingly restless. Carl continues his drumming, another begins to quietly sing, two boys nearest to me begin to poke each other with rulers. AM attempts to broaden out the discussion to the students' experiences)

AM - I mean how many people here have heard those sorts of stories? If it's not Pakistanis killing cats it's Chinese serving them up in restaurants. Isn't it? (the noise in the class starts to rise)

IAN - Chinese it's like that...

AM - (conscious of the growing noise and fragmentation of the discussion talks over him) In fact I know somebody, not in this class (several students make bids to talk or shout out) Yes in this class,

I know someone (emphatically over the growing noise) in this class who told me about a Chinese restaurant near them, or a take away where they'd been found...

IAN - (interrupting) Was it him? (pointing to his friend who thumps him)

AM - No I'm not saying who it was, Some-body actually said to me once (much talking in the background as several students start conversations) That a Chinese restaurant had been found serving cats or dog in the restaurant, Now where do ideas like that come from? (several students talk at once, The discussion fragments, Ian shouts that perhaps his friend was supplying them and gets thumped again, Noise increases and the discussion becomes impossible to transcribe, Several students swap stories about Chinese restaurants, others drift off into their own conversations)

AM - (attempting to restore order shouts) Er Rudolf, Come on where do you get these stories from? (several students continue to talk, No one answers)

AM - (shouting) 3rd year! (noise slowly subsides) Let's just have some careful thought, Barry quiet! Ian quiet! You two there who have just come in, Don't talk at all, Where do people pick up these stories from? What happens to them? (several students continue talking)

ST - Rumours

AM - It's rumours isn't it, Why? (the talking continues) Sh,,Sh (Ian burps loudly, followed by an immediate 'Sorry Miss', AM shouts) Can I just have everybody's attention, Moona!

M - Yes Miss (super politely pretending she doesn't know its a reprimand)

AM - Right Carl! Can I just have everybody's attention (Carl starts drumming again, grinning at the boy sat next to him) Carl! (shouts AM)

C - Sorry Miss

AM - You do hear rumours about usually foreign people, Their restaurants serve up all sorts of things, dogs, cats, anything they can think of, they serve them up, It's never usually British people who do this, But how many of you over the last few days have heard a report or seen on T.V...

ST - (interrupting) about animals

AM - No nothing to do with animals, About British hospitals (the talking starts again) Anyone heard about the food in British hospitals?

(several students shout 'Yeah, Yeah' as if to say 'we're bored, what's she going to tell us about now')

ST - Cockroaches

AM - Cockroaches, bird droppings

ST - (several shout) Er...Er (the talking resumes)

AM - (shouting) Right...Sh (talking continues) Barry! Alright (AM stops waiting for the talking to subside, She shouts) Will you stop talking! (it continues) Moona! Sulakahn! So rumours like this about food, what foreign people serve up in their resaurants are made a nonsense of... (Carl starts

talking loudly) Carl! Are made a nonsense of. The fact that we all know this about what goes on in our own country and actually happens in hospitals (Carl's drumming starts again) places where,,

IAN - (interrupting) 5 minutes and the bell's going

AM - Alright, Places where you wouldn't expect that things like this to happen, Although in fact in the last year large numbers of people have actually died in our hospitals of salmonella, that's food poisoning...

M - (interrupting) Miss did you see that thing about that mental hospital in Scotland (a student yawns very loudly, several talk at once)

AM - Listen 3rd years, We should be able to talk about these things without you all talking, like Carl now and Rudolf there and Moona here (they ignore her and continue talking) Barry! Paul! (they continue talking, AM sighs, She's lost them and it's not far off the bell, She shouts) Look the bell will go in a minute, I'll go to my meeting late and you will wait!

BARRY - (diverting AM) Miss did the other class get sent home?

AM - (conceding) Look we'll talk about it on Monday,

(the class sit and chat in the few minutes that remain of the lesson)

On the one occasion I observed that Alison Mitchell tried group work she did succeed in involving far more students in discussion, but again several of the class used the freedom they were given to 'mess about'. This lesson again was with her 3rd year. They had just finished reading 'My Mate Shofiq'. Alison Mitchell wrote several questions on the blackboard - 'What do you think the message of the book was? Were there any parts of the book which embarrassed you? Were there any parts of the book which you found annoying? Some people believe that 'My Mate Shofiq' should be banned because a) it is too violent and b) it is racist, what do you think? After a brief explanation she asked the class to split up into friendship groups to talk about the questions and if possible come to some agreement. A lot of talking began, little of which was about the questions and students remained in their desks facing the front. Alison Mitchell decided to be more directive. She went around the class saying 'Right you work together and you three can work together' and telling students to turn their desks around.

Eventually, after much noisy scrapping of chairs and desks and complaints about the groups the students started to talk about the questions they had been set. Initially the discussions were lively and constructive with most students taking part. But Alison Mitchell had not made objectives or procedures clear and some students, despite her (and my) help began to fool around. One

group got through the questions in about 4 minutes agreeing quickly their answers to each of the questions. 'Don't know' to the first, 'No' to the second, 'No' to the third, and 'No' to the fourth. They then got on to talking about what to them were more entertaining things, ironically in this case about 'Paki bashing' and 'Irish jokes'. They used the 'space' which had been given to them in the lesson to laugh and joke, and mess about. Others in the class took the discussion more seriously, but as time went on they became more excited and noisy. Alison Mitchell clearly became tense feeling that she was beginning to lose control. After 15 minutes she tried to bring them back together to a whole class reporting back session, but she struggled as the group had become hard to mobilise as a unit. She threatened and cajoled, but was faced with laughter, interruptions and shouting. 5 minutes later the bell went and she gratefully let the class go.

It was problems like this which meant that Alison Mitchell was often reluctant to try discussion work. English teaching for her seemed generally to become a mixture of teacher-led public reading, brief teacher exposition and individual student seat work. As she said, 'I'd like to do more group work and oral work, but it just doesn't seem to work. When I try it they just seem to use the opportunity to become silly and talk about anything but what you want them to talk about'. She felt that it was difficult to move away from a system in which she strongly 'framed' the knowledge transmitted in the classroom and exerted a strong control over patterns of classroom interaction.

As with Jennifer Green she also felt under pressure with her 4th year exam group to get through material so that they had enough good written work in their folders for assessment at the end of their 5th year. This pressure was made even more extreme by the teachers' industrial action which appeared to affect this group more than others. Many of them she felt had fallen dangerously behind with their written work. They were also a 'difficult' group containing a large core of relatively 'bright', but 'obstreporous' girls who could, as Alison Michell said, 'cause all sorts of problems if I let them'.

This was graphically brought home to me when I observed one lesson when the group were reading 'To Kill a Mockin Bird'. It was an afternoon lesson and several students were late arriving. When they did they were boisterous and noisy. One of the boys was pursued by a boy from another group who had to be barred from coming in to the room by another teacher on the corridor. Alison Mitchell attempted to split up a group of noisy girls who often caused her

trouble. They refused to move. She said rhetorically that perhaps they would like to go to room 108 (the school's withdrawal unit) were upon they all got up, deliberately taking her literally, and started towards the door causing great amusement amongst others in the class. They sat down again and Alison Mitchell began the lesson, but there were frequent interruptions, grins, giggles and other non-verbal communications across the classroom. Alison Mitchell became more and more angry. A few minutes later in her reading she came to the word 'nigger' in the text. Several of the girls protested about the use of the word, but in such a way as to make it impossible for Alison Mitchell to explain the context in which the story was written or why the word was used. Several of the group used the situation to resume their conversations across the room, another laughed loudly and hysterically. Alison Mitchell abandoned the reading and asked the class to continue reading individually. She was clearly very annoyed, not at the girls' protests which she was prepared to talk about (and in fact did later in the lesson when things had calmed down), but at the way some of the group had exploited the situation.

As the majority of the class read, or made a pretence of reading quietly the minority continued their antics, signalling across the room, snatching conversations and asking daft questions. This culminated in Tracey one of the central members of the awkward group of girls asking if she could go to the toilet to take a tablet. When Alison Mitchell said no, she should have taken it at break time, she became belligerent and verbally aggressive, eventually, after threatening Alison Mitchell with 'bringing her Dad up' to 'beat her up', she walked out of the room to take her tablet, to the great amusement of the other girls. At this point the lesson was 3/4 over and a semblance of calm returned. Many appeared to think that perhaps Tracey had gone a little too far. Alison Mitchell was able to pick up the pieces and finished the lesson with an explanation of why the author of the book used the word 'nigger' and something of the social context in which the story was set.

Alison Mitchell often found the attitudes and behaviour of the more vocal (mainly Afro/Caribbean) girls in this group (the majority of the group were girls) difficult. On the one hand, they appeared to want to play a more active role in the negotiation of classroom knowledge and in the interpretation of literature, but, on the other, they used the freedom they were occasionally given to do this to socialise and mess around. In whole class discussions they wanted to give their opinions and they always had something to say, but they

often became embroiled in what Alison Mitchell regarded as rather niggly and petty disputes with each other, and with Alison Mitchell herself, which she thought were diversionary and counter-productive. She found their naivety and lack of awareness in relation to the sorts of political ideas that she was trying to put across frustrating. The more so when they succeeded in dominating the oral interaction in the class.

In one lesson Alison Mitchell in preparation for a timed assignment the students were to complete the following week introduced a poem called 'In Oak Terrace' by Tony Connor. Its message was clearly political. It was about the life of a lonely, working class, old woman who dreams of her past life of poverty and hardship whilst living out a rather meaningless existence in a world characterised by nuclear weapons. Alison Mitchell wanted to bring out the irony, pathos and political message in the poem, and she wanted the students to take part in the activity of interpreting and analysing the poem, but the students who took part in the class discussion seemed to take her down blind alleys to irrelevant questions about the woman's past life and present life style, missing the real points. In one part of the lesson Alison Mitchell explained that it was logical to infer from the poem that the woman had been abandoned by her husband in the past. The girls disagreed, arguing that the woman might not have been married. Alison Mitchell explained further, but the girls refused to accept her logic and began to use the issue to fool around, they wouldn't accept her point of view and dug their heels in. In the end Alison Mitchell, conscious of the fact that the students had to have the 'correct' interpretation of the poem in order to complete their assignment, said, 'Suit yourselves, but if the marker decides you've wrongly interpreted the writing, well it's up to you.' Annabel, one of the girls asked, 'Who's the marker?' 'Mrs.Parker' replied Alison Mitchell, 'You write what you want, but believe me those of us who are marking feel the old woman's had a husband and she's been abandoned by him.' 'And you're all stickin' to that', said Annabel aggressively. 'Never mind Annabel do what you wish,' replied Alison Mitchell. 'I am, don't worry about it', said Annabel. 'I'm only trying to help, believe it or not,' snapped Alison Mitchell. Whilst at times the dialogue between Alison Mitchell and these girls was pleasant and productive it often became this sort of snipping match which detracted from constructive discussion of the literature.

The result of all these pressures was that often Alison Mitchell ended up, as she said 'doling it out to them', in other words engaging in transmission-type teaching where she instructed the students in the appropriate interpretation of the literature. I observed one example of this when Alison Mitchell decided to tackle a 'dub' poem with the class, 'Reggae Fi Dada' by Linton Kwesi Johnson, which is a political critique of Jamaican society based around a tribute to his dead father. After playing a recording of the poem she began to go through the text. With short student contributions (all from the core group of girls) in response to her questioning she drew out the main themes of the poem, writing them on the blackboard - 1) Hardship of his father - and poor people generally. 2) Exploitation by the government and ruling class. 3) Disintegration of society. 4) Political fighting - innocent people killed. Each one required explanation which Alison Mitchell gave at some length. She then decided to go through the text of the poem. 'Right,' she said, 'I'm going to go through it now and give you notes.... This is what the poem's about.' She began and the students started to write from her dictation or make notes on her exposition. The following extract from my lesson notes illustrates the nature of the classroom interaction. Alison Green has come to the third verse of the poem. She is addressing the whole class.

AM - Right verse 3, the next one (she reads the verse). There's a tremendous amount in that verse... (she reads the first part of the verse again) What's he describing in the first few lines?

REBECCA(R) - The country

AM - but what about it.... There's a lot in there about trees being cut down, about the land being overgrown. It's happening in various parts of the world. People are cutting down the rain forest to make money and the land dries out and decays. It's happening in Jamaica and it's happening in places like Africa and India. The trees are cut down and what happens?

ANNABEL(A) - the land dries up

AM - the land dries up and... (she goes on to explain soil erosion)... So in that one line you've got neglect. Who's cutting them down?

A - The government

AM - The government and the big corporations... probably the big corporations... the big corporations exploit land for profit and people who farm the land are moved off, usually poor people... look at the words thistle and thorn, what sort of plants are they?

R - Hard

AM - If you get in there what will happen? What will happen if you try and grow things in there? (she answers the questions herself) You're physically going to get hurt....If your livelihood is taken away, at the physical level you're going to be hurt, but you're also going to get hurt at the mental level. So he's talking here at two different levels...You can look at the poor as neglected, physically as well as mentally. It's a physical and a mental wound. It's the same in this country...if you don't provide work and give few benefits...if you haven't got a job it's almost as if you don't exist...it's like another wound, a stab in the back...The neglect of governments, even those who come to power to improve the lot of the poor....He's saying their lot hasn't improved. And contrasted with this you've got dangled 'glaring sights of guarded affluence'...It's the same in his country with the media advertising and shops full of things people can't have. But if it's 'guarded affluence' what is it?

R - Rich

AM - And guarded, it's referring to a small number of people in the country who have wealth...You can draw another parallel with this country....A small number of people own wealth....with the poor living on supplementary benefit (she quotes figures)...The situation is similar in Jamaica, guarded affluence is literally there...They literally guard their wealth and property...All the poor can do is to look on...And then 'the arrogant vices...

A - (interrupts reading the poem)...'mocking symbols of independence'

AM - Slavery's past...colonialism is behind them...What is it?

R - Laughing

A - But financially

AM - Good. They're wage slaves, slaves to poverty. Nothing's changed, despite the fact that the country has its own government and runs its own affairs, there's still the division between the rich and the poor, Independence hasn't made any difference.

(field notes)

Whilst on occasions in other parts of the lesson certain members of the class did engage in more of a dialogue with Alison Mitchell about the interpretation of the poem, participation was limited, and restricted to the small number of vocal girls. Others spent their time copying down notes and passively listening. The poem was, of course, a difficult one to interpret. It was read and written in a black dialect and required some knowledge of Jamaican society. But the majority of students did not have the opportunity to actively participate in the process of making sense of the poem or in drawing the sorts of parallels with British society that Alison Mitchell clearly had in mind. Ironically students were being asked to consider a radical message, but

expected to play only a passive role in accepting the ideas that Alison Mitchell had formulated for herself. The ideas were clearly Marxist orientated and unfortunately students were not encouraged to challenge or given the opportunity to debate them.

Thus Alison Mitchell's teaching tended to be even more constrained by institutional circumstances and pressures than did Jennifer Green's. Forced to adopt strategies to maintain order within the classroom and ensure that her exam group 'got through the work' her pedagogy was often very different from the discussion based ideal that the English teachers wanted. Moreover, in some of her lessons her own political commitments appeared to be an important influence on the selection of curriculum content and the interpretations she made of this content in the classroom, and unfortunately students often had little opportunity to examine alternative views.

Susan Parker

Susan Parker had enjoyed a rather meteoric rise to the position of deputy head. She was responsible for curriculum development in the school and was a key exponent of more 'progressive', 'student-centred' teaching methods, and an important ally of David Benyon. She was strongly committed to the school, to the students and to her philosophy of education. Moreover, she was an ardent feminist and had developed Anti-Sexist work in the school, encouraging staff to examine their curriculum materials and classroom practices and running a number of 'Girls Days' and 'Boys Days' in which students were given the opportunity to engage in sexually 'non-traditional' activities. Like Jennifer Green she was very energetic and always seemed to be organising and planning or rushing off to a meeting.

As deputy head her actual teaching load was small compared to the other English teachers. In the 1985/6 academic year she taught only two groups - a 5th year, top set examination group, and a 4th year group which consisted of students withdrawn, on rotation, from other groups to do what she called 'Equal Opportunities' work. This course involved the examination of literature available for young children specifically looking at sexism and racism, and several visits to a local nursery school so that the students could work with the children. Because of time pressures and her heavy commitments I spent only a small amount of time with her. My observation of her lessons was restricted to 6 sessions with her 5th year group.

Whilst she more than any other English teacher espoused the ideal of an interactive, child-centred pedagogy, she confessed that because of her role as deputy head and the fact that her 5th year group had to produce a certain amount of work for assessment, that what she did with the group was 'fairly unadventurous, quite traditional really'. She usually organised her work around a piece of literature which she selected and, as she said, 'we read it, talk about it, and then write about it', setting written assignments to be completed in class and at home. The class did not present particular discipline problems, at least not in comparison with other groups in the school. They were, however, Susan Parker maintained, 'a bit immature', 'rather conservative in their expectations of teachers', 'not very aware politically' and whilst many 'worked well' some were 'difficult to motivate' and 'needed to be pushed'. Susan Parker appeared to enjoy a fairly friendly and informal relationship with the group

In the lessons that I observed the students were working on a literature assignment for their 16+ course work. Earlier in their course they had read 'The Basketball Game' a short novel by Julius Lester, and in these lessons they were looking again at an extract from the story where a black boy who had recently moved to the racially segregated town of Kansas City tried to borrow a book from the library previously reserved for whites. Susan Parker explained that she felt this was the type of Anti-Racist material that the department ought to be using. It raised questions of inequality and injustice and emphasised the way in which social structures and oppressive practices could be successfully resisted and challenged; 'a positive challenging of racism through literature', she said. In the first lesson I made the following field notes.

(SP late in arriving, 7 girls, 8 boys present, some get their folders out, most sit and chat waiting for SP)

SP - (standing at the front, students sitting in desks facing her in a rough sort of square) Right, we're not just sitting and writing today, We'll have a change from work, not that talking isn't work. Can we have coats off please. (the usual ritual of reluctantly taking coats off begins. Following this SP asks them to get out the duplicated extracts that some of them read last lesson, and after forcing the chatting to subside with the threat of extending the lesson after school, she explains to the class that she wants them to talk about the extract and then to answer some questions on it as a comprehension exercise and an assignment for their course work.

She then explains the background to the story, the fact that it is set in the mid-west of America in the 1950s when there was quite rigid racial segregation, and that it is about the relationship between a black boy and a white girl. One or two students chip in briefly in response to SP's recall questions, SP then tries to broaden the class discussion out to compare the situation with Britain)

SP - Is it like that in Britain? (i.e. racially segregated housing) I suppose it is really a bit, what do you think? Norman shut up a minute.

(the class are not really settled, although some are concentrating very hard, others have little conversations of their own, SP finds it difficult to keep them together to concentrate on the discussion)

STUDENT(ST) - It is like that in Britain, there aren't many black people live around my way (he is a white student living a fair distance away from the school in a mainly white area)

NORMAN(N) (Afro/Caribbean student) - No Miss I think people mix together more, I don't think there is as much prejudice today in England

SP - (says she agrees with the first boy) Where do most black people in Milltown live? (she suggests some areas and the students suggest a few) There are very few black people living in Kidsbrook, There's only one Asian family living in my street, Areas are dominated by different cultural groups, Why do you think that is?

N - because black people might be called names and there are racial insults, so black people don't want to move,

SP - So black people want to move to areas where they are not insulted,

WAYNE(W) (Afro/Caribbean student) - But I think things are changing, people are mixing more now,

SP - So there's a gradual process of integration? What do you think girls? Amanda?

AMANDA(A) - Most of the people are mainly separate...

N - (interrupting) Miss, where there are more white people in an area then Asians are more accepted than black people,

SP - So you think there is more hostility to the Afro/Caribbean community? (the boys laugh at her use of this term) What about Handsworth?

N - That was mainly black and Asian, The Asians used to get a lot of boot from the white, but it's not so much now,

(SP pauses the discussion is still unsettled, the girls chat and laugh and SP finds it hard to get them to listen to each other)

SP - So the situation in the story is still relevant today, Racial hostility leads to segregation,

W - but it's not so intense or obvious,

SP - and it's not legalised,

W - Some of the police do,

SP - Amanda (she can't hear what the boy is trying to say because Amanda is talking)

SP - (to Wayne) Is that fact or rumour?

ST - Fact , it has happened to me,

SP - Angela can you listen, What, the police pick on black people, fact or rumour?

ST - I know because I got flung in a van and they shouted insults at me, Well not exactly me (pause)

SP - Are you going to tell us?

RONY(R) (white student) - it has happened to me as well,

SP - So it happens to black and to white,

R - It's nothing to do with racism, the police pick up whites as well,

W - But the police pick up black boys and make racist insults,

(at this point Amanda, a black girl, makes some gesture at Rony, Rony calls her 'a dick', she replies that he wouldn't know what one of them was!)

SP - (shouts) Rony!

(At this point SP decides that 'the discussion is getting far too personal' and after calming the situation and then getting Norman to read the extract to the class she restricts discussion to a consideration of the text),(SP's questions become less exploratory and more directed to extracting information and meaning from the text, For example...)

SP - What is the young librarian a symbol of?

W - A new age or generation.

SP - So is the future going to be better if people are more liberal, It's an unpleasant incident but has a happy ending, What word is used to put the boy down?

N - 'boy'

SP - So words can be racist, For example 'boy' used in this way, What was the law concerning the use of the library?

ST - Anyone can use it.

SP - So what stopped him using it?

W - The fact that no blacks used it.

SP - And the way black people were treated, They were legally entitled to use the library, but an unwritten rule prevented them.

(following a short discussion of the text along these lines SP moved on to explaining the marking scheme and the comprehension questions that the students had to answer)

(Field notes)

SP succeeded to some extent in creating a situation where the students in the class could begin to talk about their own ideas and experiences. Her questions at the beginning of the lesson were speculative and open-ended and students had some opportunity to articulate their own views. But it was relatively short lived. Personal animosities intervened and the discussion had to be abandoned. Moreover, the discussion was still very much teacher centred. Susan Parker asked all the questions and although, some of the students were beginning to exercise some influence over the course of the discussion, participation was restricted to a very small number and all occurred through the teacher. Most of the class played no active part.

The following four lessons were devoted to brief whole class question and answer sessions on the comprehension questions followed by short periods of written work in which the students wrote a draft of their answer to the particular question. The pace of students' work was rigidly controlled by Susan Parker, who patrolled the room, glancing over students' shoulders, glaring at those who spoke and moving anyone who showed signs of 'being silly'. She felt

it was necessary to 'push' the students to get the maximum amount of work out of them, despite the protests from some of the girls that she was 'going too fast'. 'You may not like it now', she said, 'but you'll thank me for it later'.

In the question and answer sessions Susan Parker attempted to extract, with the assistance of the students, the relevant points which would make a good answer, but again participation was limited to the few, and where appropriate answers were not forthcoming Susan Parker filled the gap with sometimes lengthy exposition. In preparation for the final question which asked the students 'From this story what impressions have you formed about the type of society in which these people live?' she said,

I'm leaving that entirely to you. But think about the type of society that the old librarian lives in and contrast it with the society that the young librarian is trying to create. One world is about people separated because of their race. It's a world of prejudice, conflict, hostility. But it's a society which is changing with the younger generation. The old woman symbolises the old days of prejudice and discrimination, the young woman symbolises change and the future. The black boy is fighting for his rights, fighting for change. So it's a society full of prejudice, hostility, but there are signs that the society is changing. This is a positive view. The picture is one of people in control of their lives, fighting for change within institutions and these changes will come from changes in attitudes.

Throughout the lessons frequent reference was made to the requirements of the examiners and what they might be looking for in a good assignment. The production of 16+ course work appeared to be the main influence on pedagogy and the form of teacher-student interaction.

In fact Susan Parker's teaching in these few lessons appears to have been very similar to that of the other English teachers. She maintained strong control over curriculum content which she selected in order to present a radical Anti-Racist image. She used literature to raise social and political issues for discussion. In the classroom, although a small number of students had some opportunities to relate their own experiences and to articulate their ideas, discussions were generally teacher centred and controlled. Susan Parker maintained a strong grip on the pace of work and the interaction of students. Whilst classroom control does not seem to have been an extreme problem in these lessons, difficulties in 'mobilising' the attention of some students and threats to order stemming from inter-student animosity were influential in the

teaching style employed. More significant appears to have been the impending assessment of students' files of course work which meant the emphasis in the lessons was on the production of written work.

Jane Gabriel

Jane Gabriel was a probationary teacher, although she had taught adults in a language school and had completed part of her probationary year in her previous school. She was stongly committed to 'progressive' educational ideals and was radical in her politics. She wanted more egalitarian teacher-student relationships, greater student control over learning, a collaborative form of English teaching where teacher and student could discuss literature together and debate social and political issues. As such she was highly regarded by David Benyon. She was the sort of teacher he wanted in the school.

Like the other English teachers she was very involved with her work. She loved organising and devoted considerable energy to arranging the activities surrounding the school's 'Anti-Apartheid Week' and later the 'Women's Week'. She also attended meetings and events outside the school and was a member of the school's working party on police involvement. She believed in developing strong positive relationships with the students and in her lessons she tried to be friendly, 'non-authoritarian' and informal, hoping that students would see her 'as a person rather than just a teacher'. She explained that the most rewarding thing about teaching she felt was 'the relationships with the kids' and she prided herself on the fact that she was 'approachable' and students could come and talk to her about things that they wouldn't talk about with more senior staff. She described one of her best lessons as one in which her 3rd year class who had been reading 'Joby' by Stan Barstow talked about the problems of death in the family, and then about divorce and separation. 'We spent the whole lesson just talking about it', she said. The achievement was that the students had talked about themselves, shared their own experiences and feelings, had empathised with each other and offered each other mutual support. 'We achieved a lot in that lesson,' she explained, 'the atmosphere was nice and their relationship with me developed a lot.'

Given these ideals and the reality of the school Jane Gabriel faced dilemmas which she found difficult to resolve and this created an uncertainty in her approach in the classroom. On the one hand she wanted to be egalitarian and non-authoritarian in her relationships with students, but on the other she was expected to maintain order and control in the classroom in often difficult circumstances. Moreover, the students themselves generally had extremely conservative expectations of their teachers. A teacher who was unwilling to 'be

a teacher' in the traditional sense of strongly controlling student activities and work rates was soon typed as 'soft' and ruthlessly exploited. The more experienced English teachers had to some extent resolved this dilemma. They were prepared to amend their ideals and had developed 'coping strategies' (A.Hargreaves 1978), ideological adjustments and techniques of classroom management, which enabled them to 'survive'. They had come to believe that it was frequently necessary to provide students with a strong 'structure' of work and behaviour and for the teacher to play a more traditional, autocratic role in the classroom. They had adopted a strategy of 'internalised adjustment' (Lacey 1977)

It was this emphasis on providing structure and being authoritarian that Jane Gabriel found difficult to swallow. On several occasions in interviews she talked about how difficult she found it to adjust her pedagogic ideals to the reality of the classroom at Milltown High. Sometimes she explained how she was becoming 'firmer' or 'stricter' or 'more formal'. But she was always uneasy. 'It's not me', she said, 'I find it very difficult to make myself like that'. She, in fact, adopted the stance of 'strategic compliance' (Lacey 1977) in which she retained 'private reservations', doubts about practices in the school, about her own role in the classroom and the type of person it was making her become. She said in one interview:

I came to this school thinking it was going to be progressive and enable me to carry out my values, what I wanted out of education, what I wanted the students to get out of education and I thought the school was going to do it and I feel bitter....I feel it's a con. It's got so much on the surface, it's got so much to say and it looks lovely on paper, but in practice it's so reactionary.

Towards the end of my field work she was toying with the idea of leaving the school (which she later did) as she felt the longer she stayed the more she was 'colluding with the system'. She saw her future in community work or community education where she could 'do the teaching without doing the coercion'. (c.f. Woods 1981)

Although I had many conversations with Jane Gabriel I only observed a small number of her lessons. She was clearly often uneasy having me around and my presence appeared to add to the pressure that she felt under in the

classroom. The lessons that I did go into were selected on a fairly ad hoc basis when she was happy to have me there. I did not follow a class through a piece of work as I did with the other English teachers. My description of her practice will therefore be relatively brief.

She adopted the same pattern of organisation as the other teachers. Her work was organised around whole class reading of literature which was used to develop discussion and written work. Usually she devoted one lesson each week to class reading with each of her classes, and whilst she sometimes found such reading useful as a control device (as did the other English teachers) as it 'calmed the kids down', on the occasions that I observed she had problems in maintaining the concentration of students on the reading. Interruptions and lapses of attention were common as students messed about and challenged her definition of the situation.

When she attempted whole class discussions on some point in the story these problems became more extreme. She found it almost impossible to 'mobilise' student attention and to control the nature of classroom interaction. Her room was frequently disorganised with chairs and desks spread randomly around, students sat where they wanted to and she was reluctant to force them to move (although this was an aspect of her practice which she did change). As a result her classroom lacked a spatial order in which social relationships were defined. She found it difficult to establish her 'presence' at the centre of classroom interactions, something which more experienced teachers do through a combination of postural, gestural and verbal cues which convey subtle messages about classroom rules and the power of the teacher to enforce them. Students often took advantage of her uncertainty and her reluctance to adopt strategies based on coercion. They interrupted, shouted out, got up and wandered around, and frequently carried on their private conversations, thus refusing to recognise the 'formality' of class discussion or the right of Jane Gabriel to control it. Jane Gabriel herself explained that the thing she hated most was when students ignored her like this. 'It's very frightening when you're in a class and you're not getting anywhere and you're presence isn't acknowledged', she said.

As a result she often abandoned attempts to have whole class discussion and limited the time that she spent addressing the whole class. Some of the lessons I observed she got the class working with the minimum of public talk. The students would come in and Jane Gabriel would give out books, materials

and work sheets (she appeared to use work sheets more than the other English teachers) and she would explain to individuals or small groups what they had to do. Students would then work individually on a comprehension exercise or piece of creative writing. She would wander around the class talking to and helping individuals. She would cajole, persuade and reason with students. She rarely threatened or insisted that students worked. This was the way she preferred to work, she explained. She liked to discuss student's work in a collaborative way, advising them on how they could improve their writing, and she could build up 'relationships' with individual students, getting to know them and working on their individual problems. It also meant that students could have some measure of control over the pace of their work.

However, students, especially the younger ones, frequently exploited the freedom which Jane Gabriel gave them. In several lessons although the more motivated students got on with their work those who were less interested used the opportunity to chat, laugh and fool around. Their work rate was sporadic. Frequently her attention was monopolised by these students as in order to keep them on the task set she had to talk to them, advise them and cajole them. Sometimes student talk, which she tolerated, became loud and even the more motivated students were distracted. Jane Gabriel conscious that things were 'going too far' resorted to shouting to maintain order, and became tense and anxious, feeling that she was losing control. Some students also flouted her inconsistent attempts to assert her authority and she became embroiled in confrontations and arguments. Others were slightly puzzled by the lack of clear rules and expectations.

But Jane Gabriel was well liked by many of the students. Her warm and friendly approach and her 'fraternization' (Woods 1979) (she frequently chatted to students about clothes, records, television and school gossip) meant that, although they regarded her as 'soft', she was 'someone you could get on with'. On occasions, especially when classes were reduced in size if students were sent home because of the industrial action or if students were taken out for some special event (for example when Susan Parker took out half her 4th year class to do 'Anti-Sexist' work) Jane Gabriel did succeed in putting into practice the sort of pedagogy that she wanted. In one lesson that I observed she had a class of only 8 students which she split into two to talk about a questionnaire on sexism. The students, with her help, rather than direction, organised their discussion and were all actively involved. They expressed and

explored their own ideas and related the questions to their own experiences in their families and peer group. Here she was clearly at ease, enjoying the informal relaxed atmosphere.

Such an atmosphere, however, was difficult to transfer to the whole class situation. Here Jane Gabriel often found that it was a matter of 'survival' of 'getting their heads down, lots of written work and nothing too experimental or different.' Class and group discussions, oral work, the type of pedagogy which she sought, was often unachievable.

The Caribbean English Project

Before concluding this chapter I want to briefly describe another part of the English department's work which did not involve any of the English teachers in the classroom. In the 1985/6 academic year one of the school's Section 11 teachers made contact with two Afro/Caribbean teachers working in the local community education centre on what was called the 'Caribbean English Project', and arranged for them to come into Milltown High to conduct a half-term course with 4th year students in part of their English time. About 20 students, mainly, but not exclusively, Afro/Caribbean, opted to take the course. Unfortunately I was not able to observe any of the lessons, but I did talk to the two teachers at length about their aims and the sorts of material and teaching methods they were using.

The course focused around the idea of culture and the central role which language plays in culture. In the limited time they had, the teachers aimed to increase awareness amongst students of the linguistic structures and styles of Afro/Caribbean creoles and to develop their knowledge of the relationship between language and social structures. They were, they said, looking for ways to help students, especially those who were creole speakers, to become more proficient in 'standard' English by exploring their attitudes to their own language, and by going some way to clearing up possible confusions and insecurities which arose when they had to operate in a number of different language 'codes'. They hoped to encourage students (and teachers as they did a considerable amount of INSET work with teachers in the LEA) to reassess their view of Afro/Caribbean language, to see it as linguistically valid. They did not subscribe, however, to a cultural relativist view that such language should be regarded as of equal worth and thus taught in schools. This, they realised would be a rather naive view in a society dominated by 'standard' English. Their aim was to clarify with the students the role and function of different language styles. They also tried to explain the use and importance of language in processes of social selection and, by examining the origin and history of Afro/Caribbean languages, the ways in which language is related to the social and political processes and inequalities. In fact, in a small way they were introducing the students to some quite complex sociological ideas.

Their teaching methods were similar to those favoured by the Milltown High English teachers. They explained that class and small group discussions, which

focused upon pieces of literature and student writing, were the techniques they used most. In fact, judging from their account they appear to have had more success with these methods than the mainstream English teachers often did. This was perhaps because they were working with a relatively small, self-selected group of students, who were, as a result, well motivated. The literature they selected was often written or spoken Afro/Caribbean creole, either from one of their own published anthologies (they had published several books^{of} their adult students' writing) or from established Afro/Caribbean writers, which was discussed and 'translated' with the students. They also asked students to write about their own experiences and ideas and to explore their own use of dialects in both oral and written form, and often typed this work up in preparation for the next session.

This was intended to be a one-off course with the students, but in fact it was repeated in the following year. Whether it will become a regular feature of the English department's work is difficult to know as, at the time of writing, the future funding for the project was uncertain.

Conclusion

The English teachers, then, were strongly committed to working at Milltown High. They had all chosen to work there, regarding this as part of their wider commitment to social change along socialist lines. In their approach to students they espoused an ideology of individualism and eschewed any form of premature categorisation or negative typification on the basis of background or ethnic group. They viewed students' ethnicity positively. Their policy was to present aspects of student cultures positively in the classroom, hoping that in this way student self-confidence and achievement would be enhanced. In practice, of course, the selection of such aspects involved value judgements, and these judgements were made by the English teachers as they controlled curriculum content, assessment procedures, etc.. The incorporation of students' background cultures into the curriculum was necessarily partial. Inevitably the extent to which the cultures of working class and ethnic minority students could be 'valued' and form an important part of the curriculum was limited as the English teachers were also concerned to ensure the success of their students in a society where assessments are often made on the basis of the command of appropriate 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu 1974). The English teachers trod a narrow and difficult path between valuing the languages and cultures of their students, and providing them with the qualities and skills needed for success in mainstream society. Their belief was that, in order to be successful in developing 'mainstream' qualities and skills, their teaching had to be conducted in an atmosphere in which the students' background and culture was respected and regarded as valid. Thus their aim was to build bridges with foundations in their students' world in order to encourage their self-esteem and motivation, thereby enhancing their success and opportunities in mainstream society.

Whether they were successful is difficult to judge. Certainly there was no feeling amongst any of the ethnic minority students that I interviewed that the English teachers undervalued their ethnicity or cultural heritage. In fact, sometimes the reverse was the case. Ethnic minority students occasionally complained about the amount of attention that was devoted to 'black issues'. Whilst clearly a number of students at Milltown High were alienated and lacking in motivation, the English teachers did not adopt the sort of elitist approach to English teaching which St.John-Brooks (1983) argued further

alienated many of the working class students she studied. Indeed, some students at Milltown High were encouraged to work harder because of the opportunity to express their ideas and experiences in their written and oral work and because curriculum content was related to their concerns and world. For them their teachers' efforts to bridge the cultural gaps did reap dividends.

The teachers also developed a curriculum and pedagogy in line with their aims of improving language skills, encouraging particular attitudes and values, and broadening the social and political awareness of their students. Central to the departmental philosophy was their notion of Anti-Racism. This meant maintaining positive attitudes to the students, avoiding possible discrimination either in departmental setting arrangements or in interaction in the classroom, presenting clearly to the students through the curriculum that racism was morally repugnant and unjust, and orientating their teaching toward a consideration of social and political issues. On the latter it is difficult to assess the extent to which the curriculum they presented to students included a balance of different viewpoints, first because of the difficulties of assessing 'balance', and second because the lessons I observed were not necessarily a representative sample of the department's work. In the lessons I saw many of the books used were set in the past and in other societies and raised questions about the injustices of these societies. They thus implicitly presented a more positive view of contemporary British society. However, when images of British social organisation were presented in curriculum content they tended to be largely negative and drew attention to what the teachers considered to be unfairness, exploitation and injustice. This was a result of the strong political commitments of the English teachers which did tend to bias their curriculum selection in socialist directions.

But the English teachers were committed to a pedagogy based upon discussion and debate so that students could explore controversial issues and ideas from different angles and express their own views and opinions. And ideally they wanted to move towards more egalitarian teacher-student relationships and greater student control over learning. Unfortunately, in practice this pedagogy proved difficult to realise. The teachers were often heavily constrained by lack of time for planning, by the attitudes and behaviour of many of their students, and by the pressures of assessment requirements for 16+ courses. Some of the time they were forced into adopting

'survival strategies' (Woods 1979) which were more to do with maintaining order in the classroom than realising 'educational' goals. At others they were keen to ensure the maximum success for their students in public examinations and they therefore orientated their teaching more towards 'what the examiner wants' than their pedagogic ideals. This meant that in practice the number of occasions in which students could actively engage in discussion, debate and argument was limited and when discussion did occur it tended to be teacher-centred and heavily teacher controlled. Discussions in which students played a more central and active role were infrequent. This is not to say that they never occurred, but their incidence, length and quality were heavily circumscribed by the situational constraints facing the teachers.

Footnotes

(1) There may, of course have been considerable 'method in their madness' as such 'relationships' helped to foster commitment and motivation amongst students who often presented problems of social control which could for a variety of reasons no longer be dealt with by 'traditional' methods.

(2) This was not a written policy, and whilst it was consensus amongst the core English teachers, some of the other teachers who came into the department appeared uncertain what their approach should be.

(3) My classroom observation included time in two academic years - 1985/6 and 1986/7

(4) Another 1 was spent watching a T.V. programme on a theme which was related to the book, 1 was a talk from another teacher again on a related issue, 1 was a lesson where the students read to the class stories that they had written as one of their assignments and 2 were related comprehension exercises.

(5) Class reading was again an effective control strategy serving to concentrate student attention on the text.

Chapter Seven

Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education in Practice - The Humanities Department.

Introduction

The Humanities Department consisted of three teachers. Stephen Barker, who took responsibility for Geography was the head of department, Peter Mills who was responsible for History and was also the head of 5th year, and Alan Moore who was responsible for Religious Education. The department was a small but stable group of experienced teachers who taught Humanities courses from years 2 to 5.

Humanities was part of the school's core curriculum. Every student from year 2 to 5 (3 to 5 in 1986/7) took the subject for 3 lessons each week. As long ago as 1973 teachers in the Geography, History and Religious Education departments had come together to teach an 'integrated' Humanities course in the lower years. In the late 1970s, as falling rolls began to bite, the teachers decided that it was no longer feasible to continue to teach separate subjects to examination level because there were not enough 'able' students to spread between them. To avoid unnecessary competition between subjects, and to overcome the growing lack of specialist staff it was decided to extend the course to the upper years of the school, so that all students took Integrated Humanities right through the school. Courses were designed which included elements of History, Geography and Religious Education and classes were taught by the same teacher for 3 lessons per week. In the 4th and 5th years the department utilised the Joint Matriculation Board's (J.M.B.) Integrated Humanities O level course and the teachers had devised their own Mode 3 C.S.E. course to run alongside it. This meant that most students were studying the same course content and there was the flexibility to move students from group to group, to enter them for O level or C.S.E. or both (1).

This system was put into operation in 1981 and after secondary school reorganisation, when Stephen Barker arrived, it continued relatively unchanged. Only minor alterations were made to curriculum content. In September 1985 the 2nd year curriculum consisted of a series of regional studies from a historical, geographical and religious perspective - Africa, the Caribbean and India were the areas considered. This work had been introduced in the late 1970s as the department's contribution to Multicultural Education. It was felt by the teachers then (and by the present staff) that such a content was more appropriate as it was important that the curriculum 'reflected the cultures and backgrounds of the different ethnic groups in the school'. The 2nd years also

studied part of what was called 'The Milltown Oxfam Project', a locally produced course designed on similar principles to Bruner's Man - A Course of Study (MACOS) and based on a case study of a community in Guatemala. In the 3rd year students studied the theme of 'Development' and the teachers had devised 3 units of work, one based around 'Development in the Third World', another on 'The Industrial Revolution', and a third on 'Personal Development'. In the 4th and 5th year most students went on to the Integrated Humanities examination course which consisted of 5 units of work which were selected from the 10 offered by the J.M.B.. One term was spent on each of the following topics - People and Work, Poverty, Persecution and Prejudice, War, and Beliefs. Groups were rotated so that each teacher could, where possible, teach topics close to their subject specialism. Students were continuously assessed and although the examination board outlined the 'qualities' on the part of the students which were to be assessed, the teachers themselves had considerable control over the means of assessment. They were able to devise their own course work assignments which they marked, their marks then being moderated in comparison with other examination centres. They also enjoyed relative freedom to select curriculum content as the content of each topic specified by the examination board was intended to provide a 'framework' rather a 'uniformity of content' and it was 'anticipated that centres will wish to adopt their own, individual approaches to each topic' (J.M.B. 1983).

The Humanities Department was situated in 3 large classrooms on the second floor at the back of the school. It was a relatively quiet part of the school adjacent to rooms which were used for Office Practice and Learning Support and the Humanities teachers had few of the corridor supervision problems that faced the English teachers. It was, however, rather isolated and doors and walls were often graffitied and vandalised during lunch hours when few teachers were around. Two of the classrooms adjoined a stockroom where books and resources, duplicating machine and departmental video, T.V. and film projector were kept. On the surface the department appeared well resourced, but a recent L.E.A. dictat that any school produced booklets or worksheets which contained copyright material should be destroyed had created enormous shortages. In the past many of the teachers, involved in school-based curriculum development, had produced their own teaching materials, often using cuttings and extracts from a variety of different books and resource packs. These had been duplicated on the school's off-set litho. Now the teachers were

not allowed to use these materials and had been forced to hurriedly buy commercially produced textbooks. Often the books were unsuitable or inadequate for the courses that the teachers wanted to teach. Moreover, they were expensive and therefore in short supply. Whilst some of the teachers preferred using textbooks, it did mean that resources in several parts of the Humanities curriculum were scarce and the teacher's flexibility in deciding on curriculum content was reduced.

As in the English department the 3 Humanities teachers came from a variety of backgrounds, but displayed a marked similarity in approach to subject and pedagogy. Stephen Barker had been born in Milltown, was from a working class background, and had trained as a teacher in the early 1960s at a local training college following a Geography degree at Milltown University. He then worked at a Technical High school in a neighbouring L.E.A. before moving to a comprehensive in Milltown as a head of Geography. He stayed there for 9 years until in 1982 the L.E.A. decided to reorganise its secondary schools. At this stage, along with many other teachers in the city, he was redeployed. He was not keen to come to Milltown High. 'The reputation of the school that filtered through to my part of the world was not good', he explained, and it meant a long journey to work across the city centre. His choice was, however, limited and he ended up at Milltown High even though it was only 4th or 5th on his list of preferences. However, he was concerned 'to make a good job of it', and after 3 years, although it was 'not what I would have chosen', he was 'reasonably happy'. He was, however, looking for a job in 'an easier school' where 'there is more academic interest, where the children are better motivated and there's a lot less hassle and therefore you've got more energy to put into other things rather than surviving each period at a time'.

Peter Mills was from a Welsh working class background. Following his National Service he was one of the last 2 year trained teachers. He began teaching in 1958, taught in a variety of secondary schools and became responsible for Social Education and Careers in a newly formed comprehensive school in 1967. Unfortunately this school closed in 1978 and he was redeployed. At first the L.E.A. offered him a scale 1 post teaching History at a 'good' comprehensive school close to home, but this would have meant 'being 6th in the History department behind someone who had just finished their probationary year, so, after 20 years teaching I said 'No thank you''. At that time a scale 2 job in charge of History at Milltown High was advertised and

Peter Mills came to see the then head and was offered the job. Although his early months at the school proved one of the most difficult periods in his teaching career he was lucky. In 1980 a Head of House retired and he got the job on a scale 4. At the reorganisation of 1982 he was happy to stay in the school as his job was up-graded to a senior teacher scale and he became a member of the school's senior management team. However, he had become rather disenchanted with the way the school was being organised and run, the increasing difficulty of dealing with many students, and the 'outside interference' which made teachers 'answerable to all kinds of lay people who have had no professional training whatsoever', and so he was considering early retirement.

Alan Moore, the most junior member of the department, was again from a Welsh working class background. He was college trained, but had since done an Open University degree part-time. He began teaching in 1979 at a comprehensive school in Milltown where he taught Religious Education, and Personal and Social Education. He was, in his own words, 'an ambitious sort of person' and although, after living in the Chesham part of the city when he first moved to Milltown, he said he 'wouldn't have applied for a job at Milltown High for anything', when a job did come up at the school on a scale 2 he applied. 'I can't afford to give the inspectorate the view that I'm not prepared to apply for jobs', he said. 'I came along to the interview with no grace at all. I mean I had no intention of being nervous or humble, because I really thought I don't want the job... and I got it, God help me!'. He described his first term as 'an incredible shock', because of problems of classroom control which he had never experienced before. After a while, however, in which he 'ran things really tightly' by 'never letting anything go' and 'running detentions every night of the week', the situation improved and he was able to teach more in the way he wanted to. But after 2 years he was looking for promotion and in August 1986 he left the school to take up a scale 3 job in a neighbouring L.E.A.

These, then, were the 3 Humanities teachers. None had really wanted to come to the school and they lacked the sort of commitment to the school that the English teachers espoused. Nevertheless, they were experienced and competent teachers who often provided an element of calm and stability to Milltown High.

The Humanities Teachers' Conception of their Subject

As with the English teachers there was considerable consensus amongst the Humanities teachers about 'subject paradigm' and 'subject pedagogy'. This was perhaps surprising given that they all had different subject back grounds and, within the department, different subject responsibilities. But individual subject loyalties were not strong and the department did not appear to be an arena for competing subject interests. All 3 teachers agreed that Integrated Humanities course were the most appropriate for 'this type of school'. This was mainly for the pragmatic reasons mentioned above, but also because 'our kids don't see the difference between separate subjects' (Alan Moore), 'when they had separate subjects in the past they used to get into a lot of trouble moving around on the corridor' (Peter Mills), and because of the possibility of teaching group rotation in the 4th and 5th year 'staff didn't have to put up with kids who they didn't hit it off with' (Peter Mills). Integrated Humanities courses were mainly justified in terms of 'administrative convenience' (Hargreaves, A. 1986) and social control (c.f. Ball 1981) rather than educational ideology (2).

The 3 Humanities teachers all saw the subject as having three main aims (though each gave slightly different emphases), apart from the general aims of literacy, numeracy and social skills which Stephen Barker said 'is what I hope we're all doing all the time'. First they hoped to transmit a certain amount of knowledge about the social world and the variety of ways people interact with their environment. They did not see themselves as transmitting only knowledge about British culture, history and society and Christian beliefs and values, but wanted to give students knowledge about different cultures, religions and historical events from around the world. Their aim was that students should have a deeper understanding of the variety of human behaviour and begin to formulate views and opinions based upon accurate information. As Alan Moore explained:

I think we're trying....to give them some knowledge of what actually goes on in the world, how things are organised, how different people live, what different people think and believe in, and why things happen in the way that they do... And I hope that we do begin to challenge some of the ideas that they have. I mean they are very narrow some of them. They live in a

very small world and they get most of their ideas from watching rubbish on the T.V. or from reading the Sun. I hope that we can give them more accurate information and that they can begin to think a bit more about the world that they live in.

And Peter Mills:

We would be looking at giving the youngsters as broad a view of what living in the world at present actually entails, problems that are encountered, not just in our own area, but on a world wide basis, problems that are common in several different parts of the world and how these come about in the first place, how countries and individuals have tried in the past and are trying to do some thing about it. It's to give an overall picture as such and to give them this awareness and also so that they can start to make judgements and so forth....One part of it is that we've got to be givers of information. I would hope also that I try to motivate the youngsters so that they are prepared to put forward their own views, put forward their own ideas and so forth, in that I would hope that it's not just an exercise where I'm giving information and they're writing bits and pieces down on paper and doing drawings and so on, but I would also like to think that they begin to think, begin to wonder, and again make judgements, formulate their views on the information that they receive.

In response to my question about whether they were trying to present a particular view of the world each of the Humanities teachers claimed to be presenting 'a balance' in that different explanations and ideas on social issues were considered. Stephen Barker said:

I think it's important to look at several points of view and different explanations for things. For example when we look at something like why different industries are located where they are we consider all the different factors...or when we look at the question of nuclear weapons we try to put all sides of the argument. We wouldn't be doing our jobs properly if we didn't.

Their intention was to provide accurate information and a variety of viewpoints in order that students could formulate their own views and opinions. They aimed also to encourage students to look more deeply at social phenomena and become aware of the often complex factors which give rise to particular events. So for example in teaching about something like the famine in Ethiopia, Stephen Barker explained:

I would try to teach them about the background to the situation, so they don't just think 'Oh people starving away, doing nothing about it, well we'll send them a few bob and that's it'....you know I'd try to get them to think about all the complex factors and events that led upto that situation, and that the interdependence of different parts of the world needs to be considered.

The Humanities teachers' second main aim was to develop certain skills in their students. General skills of literacy and numeracy were important, but there were also skills which were more specific to their subject area. They all mentioned skills to do with the understanding and interpretation of information and evidence. Stephen Barker said:

In Humanities we're trying to give them an awareness of certain aspects of life around them, and we try to develop certain skills, like how to get information from a map or a graph or a diagram, skills which are of value in everyday life. So, for example, if they look at a T.V. programme they can extract the point that it is making, look for the ideas that are being put across and the techniques that are being used....So that if they become chairman of the Tory party they can sit down and look for bias against them and send letters off to the B.B.C.!

And Alan Moore:

I want them to be able to look at different sources of information and be able to understand them, first of all, you know documents, diagrams, photographs, graphs, things like that, and then to be able to get from those sources the things that they need for whatever they're doing.

Peter Mills was in favour of the move in History teaching towards the use of primary sources and the interpretation of evidence, although he felt that the abilities of the students, and the L.E.A.'s ban on the use of copyright material, limited how much such an approach could be employed:

I do try to bring in as many different primary sources of information as I can, things like posters, extracts from diaries, reports, speeches, newspaper reports, photographs and things like that, so the children can look at them and with my help try to understand them, you know analyse the evidence and make some form of judgement. Sometimes it's a bit difficult because they do find it difficult to cope with some of the language and I'm not sure where we stand sometimes in terms of copyright....But I think the move away from teaching History as a set of facts in chronological order is a good thing.

The Humanities teachers maintained that in order to develop these sorts of skills it was often necessary to teach about certain concepts or ideas. 'You have to explain to them things like population density or infant mortality or nuclear deterrence or guerilla warfare', said Alan Moore. The development of skills and key concepts was central to the department's syllabi and schemes of work.

A third aim was the development in their students of certain attitudes and values. They did not aim to encourage particular political views, but wanted to promote more general values such as open-mindedness, logical thought and the use of evidence, tolerance and respect for others. This they felt was part of their commitment to Multicultural Education. In fact it is worth outlining here how the Humanities teachers saw Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism rather than considering it in a separate section as I did with the English teachers. Again there was little difference in their individual views.

The Humanities teachers all rejected the idea that they should attempt to foster cultural integration by emphasising a narrowly 'British' cultural heritage. Instead they stressed the multicultural nature of British society and thought it was important that students learned about a variety of cultures, religions and histories through the study of themes and topics which drew attention to common aspects of different societies.

Stephen Barker said that whilst he was uncertain of the meaning of Anti-Racism, that it appeared to mean 'positive steps to end discrimination, and look carefully at materials and the ideas we are trying to put across', and he would support this. He felt a Multicultural approach which aimed to, 'build up people who are tolerant, understanding and appreciative of other peoples' backgrounds, beliefs and traditions, to enable them to live and work together' was a more accurate description of the department's approach. Peter Mills agreed. He saw Multiculturalism as:

...to do with or having in school and education that is not narrow in that it just restricts the learning or the information giving to that of say England or Britain, in that it's an education which encompasses the history, the geography, the culture and so on of as many different peoples as possible and as far as we are concerned here of those ethnic minorities that we would find living in this particular area.

He felt this was Anti-Racist in the sense that:

It's trying to educate those people who are bigoted...there are some youngsters who are very, very racist. And what we have got to do is that we have got to try and put into our education this business of tolerance and understanding of other peoples' backgrounds, customs, culture and so on and try get out of some children, that just because they happen to be white that they're better....We musn't be insular in what we're doing...They've got to be tolerant of other people.

Alan Moore had a similar view. He regarded the department's approach as Multicultural because: 'We educate about many societies, many cultures, many ways of life, and that's a lot of what we do in Humanities'. But he did have some reservations about the approach adopted:

The school in a sense has failed because it teaches about many cultures, but doesn't involve those cultures that are in the school in what it's doing. Because we're generally a white staff we look as outsiders at black culture, if there is one....and I suppose it could be perceived that Multicultural Education at Milltown High is charity from a white middle

class staff, and I wonder if there's some truth in that...whether our commitment is superficial in a sense...We're teaching about their culture, but in a plastic sense and not really using the kids so much as a resource.

He also felt they were Anti-Racist in that they were 'educating people to be tolerant and accepting of each other as a way of breaking down racism'. He suggested that Multiculturalism could be used to create situations in which racist attitudes could be broken down:

When you talk about other religions, for example, Asian religions and you get, even though it's not shouted anymore, under the breath, sort of 'Paki this and Paki that'....I mean I challenge that. So in a sense the hidden curriculum that comes out of a Multicultural curriculum can challenge racism.

One of the aims of the Humanities teachers, then, was to encourage the values of tolerance, empathy, and acceptance of others by teaching a Multicultural curriculum. This, combined with their other aims determined the curriculum content that they selected. It was based around regional studies in the 2nd year and key themes in the 3rd, 4th and 5th years, and utilised material from a variety of different societies and world contexts.

It might be useful here to describe briefly two of these themes to illustrate the type of curriculum that was selected. In the 3rd year students considered the topic of 'Personal Development' as part of the broader theme of 'Development'. In this topic they looked at the socialisation and role of children in different societies past and present, and the variety of religious customs and traditions which marked the important stages in a person's life cycle. In the 4th year as part of their O/CSE course students studied a topic entitled 'Beliefs'. This unit aimed to give them some knowledge about the variety of religious, moral and political beliefs and values, and so included information on the central beliefs of some of the main world religions - in this case Christianity, Islam, Sikhism and Judaism. It also included information on the central values and policies of the main political parties in Britain, and looked at the beliefs surrounding important political figures and movements in other societies and times - Ghandi, Martin Luther King, the

Suffragettes and the Nationalists and Unionists in Northern Ireland were considered. The unit also examined the beliefs of opposing groups around moral issues such as abortion, vivisection and private health care and considered the idea of 'pressure groups'. The unit was specifically designed to raise controversial issues in order to generate maximum interest and at the heart of much of the unit were important questions of social justice and conflict. Alan Moore, who designed the unit, said that he hoped that this curriculum content would also give students the opportunity to develop skills - 'language skills, study skills' and those concerned with the 'understanding and interpretation of evidence' - an understanding of certain key concepts such as 'morality, democracy, faith', and attitudes such as 'tolerance, empathy and understanding'.

Let us now turn to how the Humanities teachers approached their subject pedagogy. Turner (1983 quoted in Hammersley and Scarth (1986)) has suggested that Integrated Humanities courses were developed partly in reaction to traditional exam orientated courses which encouraged transmission based teaching and were designed to provide the opportunity for teachers to develop a pedagogy orientated to student-centred, independent, resource-based learning where 'the teacher is seen as less the purveyor of knowledge...but rather the enabler: the person who through interaction with the student, advises and directs the learner through his own chosen path', and where 'teaching and learning comes to be seen as more of a conversation between teachers and learner and their role-relationship to be egalitarian rather than authoritarian' (p.273). Teacher controlled assessment and freedom to select curriculum content from a broad framework were intended to facilitate this type of pedagogy. David Benyon certainly saw Integrated Humanities in this way and confessed his disappointment that the Humanities teachers had not moved more in this direction. The Humanities Department 4th and 5th year course handbook, written by the previous head of department, whilst saying little on the subject of pedagogy, did argue for the development of 'resource-based teaching methods which are appropriate to the needs of the pupils'.

But the Humanities teachers themselves were very sceptical about the application of such an approach at Milltown High. Whilst they did appear to have some sympathies in this direction they were more than anything experienced pragmatists. So much so that it was difficult to get at their vision of what teaching might look like in more ideal circumstances. When I asked how they would ideally like to teach Stephen Barker replied:

I'm not sure. I suppose I'd like to try much more group work, and a flexible approach, the children using more of the time to work a long at their own pace on topics that interest them, but there's less and less opportunity to do that because you can't do that with the 4th and 5th years to any great extent with exam pressure, so that only leaves the 3rd year...So there's little likelihood of me being able to try that, because I don't really have the classes apart from the 3rd year and I wouldn't risk it with them, because of the way they are.

Peter Mills did not envisage much change in his teaching style:

Perhaps I've been teaching too long. At my age it's difficult to change,...a lot of it goes back to the first few years of teaching and your own home background....there are things that are engrained.

He restricted his comments to the fact that he would like to have more teaching resources available and he would like to see a more thorough approach to the organisation of the department's resources.

Alan Moore was perhaps most in tune with 'progressive' ideals:

Ideally I'd like more discussion, more student participation, more group work, but I think I still want to direct. I'm happy enough to go on detours if the detours are productive enough, but that demands so much of the kids which often they're not prepared to give. Yes we do get sidetracked, and I don't stop the side-tracking if it's related to the things I want us to do...But generally speaking I think it's my job to facilitate learning and in that sense I've got to be able to direct it to a large extent.

They viewed David Benyon's ideas on pedagogy with some scepticism. Stephen Barker described a meeting at which David Benyon had outlined his views on classroom teaching:

We had a discussion last year in here with David Benyon. We talked about it, this resource-based and negotiated learning and so on, but yet, as I said to him at the time, when he taught up here with the 2nd and 3rd years he didn't use that approach. You know he's had the experience of it, he was regarded as being better at it, why didn't he do it?

Later in the same interview he continued:

I can see many points of value in that (David Benyon's ideas) but I'd prefer to see it in action rather than be told how it should be done. You know when people have had the opportunity to do it, they've not done so themselves...David Benyon didn't use that method when he had the 2nd and 3rd years...It must have been the ideal opportunity to do it. If it's going

to work with anybody...Now had I seen it in operation and said that's really impressive, I'm going to try something like that, but I didn't. Yes we're told how it should be done and how classrooms should be laid out and I agree with much of what he says, but in the end individual teachers have got to decide what works for them and the children when they've got them.....David Benyon's approach may work for him, but I don't think it would work for me.

The other Humanities teachers had similar views. Peter Mills thought that such ideas were 'fine in theory' but in practice:

The problem that I have is that it's one of these situations where you have a senior post within the school, that that takes up so much of your time in that there are so many outside pressures and administrative work that you have to do in that you don't have a great deal of time to prepare your lessons as you would like, and I think this is the big problem in that with the actual teaching tends to become of secondary importance to sort of looking after the 5th year, dealing with problems in the 5th year and so on, responding to various innovations that are taking place within the school, because I'm involved with the records of achievement now and also involved in the big block work experience planning and so on and these do tend to take up time. As a result ...you just don't have sufficient time to provide or produce new resources, or go and find out what there is available and so on and you tend to work along the lines that you've worked for some time really.

He also identified the attitudes and ability of the students as important constraints on his teaching. When I asked what he felt was the biggest problem he faced as a classroom teacher he said:

A general lack of motivation in the school. A couldn't care less attitude...'why bother', 'I don't have to do that anyway'.

And later in the same interview:

You don't make as much progress as you would like to do because of the ability level which we're working with....plus also the lack of motivation with a lot of the youngsters...those are the two main constraints.

Both Stephen Barker and Alan Moore felt they faced similar constraints.

Stephen Barker said:

There are two constraints as far as I see it. There's the need to keep good behaviour amongst groups of children who can be quite badly behaved and frequently around school are badly behaved. So there's a need for some area of calm, because there are, within any group children, some who need that calm atmosphere, who are lost...you see them sitting there sad and lost and slightly bewildered. So they need that kind of atmosphere, and all the other children need it as well. So there's constraints of behaviour. And then when we get into the 4th and 5th year we've got examination constraints.

PF-Does the system of assessment free you to teach in the way you would like or is it a different form of constraint?

SB-I think it's a different form of constraint. You can bring in more variety. Like some of the units they do a project and an essay and they do looking at evidence and all sorts of things...but there's still a lot of material to get through and you can't spend limitless amounts of time pursuing a particular topic because you've still got to get through a certain number of topics. So the pressures, the restrictions are still there.

Alan Moore argued that student behaviour was the biggest constraint on his teaching style:

The kids can be really very difficult if you allow them to be. If you give them an inch they'll take a mile, and so often you can't do the things that you would really like to do. I mean there's a great difference between how I'd like to run a lesson and how I do. The style is generally get 'em in, shut 'em up, talk to them, give 'em work to do, that could be very easy, very straight forward diagram copying or written question and answering,

or it could be more demanding. It depends how well I get on with the group or how responsive they are to me as much as anything.

As a result of constraints Stephen Barker also felt that there was a gap between his ideals and the reality of teaching at Milltown High:

Because so much of the time as far as I'm concerned is geared to keeping some kind of order and control so the teaching methods that I often use are intended to achieve that. They may not be the most interesting, they're not even methods that I would have used in the past. I mean, the most sort of liberal teaching approach I've used was when I taught at the grammar/technical school, when we used to devote a whole afternoon a month to having all the groups together and they did project work, polystyrene models, making little cardboard models, working at their own pace. Now I wouldn't do that sort of thing here and maybe I should. But there was no discipline problem there. So you could do that. You could make up for lost time later on whereas I wouldn't use that form of teaching method here.

Later in the interview Stephen Barker explained how he had tried project work on a small scale at Milltown High, but he 'found that heavy going, the end results didn't really produce very much'. In the end it was often the case that 'playing it safe is the best bet most of the time'. All three teachers explained how they thought forms of independent, resource-based learning were often unsuitable. Alan Moore's response was perhaps typical:

Although the kids do have to do projects as part of the exam course many of them find it very difficult and we don't spend much time in school on them. I mean, they need a basic amount of motivation and they couldn't care less many of them, so it's very difficult getting them to do them properly. The department really isn't set up around the idea of resource-based learning. We just haven't got enough resources and we haven't really got the kids with the interest or motivation to operate such a system.

Stephen Barker was also sceptical about the use of discussion and small group work with full classes:

The trouble I find with discussions is that you get a few of them discussing, a few of them shouting in, and a lot of them just dreaming away and having a private conversation somewhere else. I'm not sure that a whole class gets a great deal out of a discussion.

Although he sometimes used small group work when he had the assistance of student teachers, the opportunities for such work were limited, especially in the 4th and 5th year:

Mainly because I find that there's such a lot to get through. I find they work better individually...and so I've never tried it. I don't think they would fit in the work that they've got to do. Because some of the terms are very short. I mean this term is ridiculously short. Not counting the time lost by union action.

Peter Mills agreed, suggesting that the students' rather traditional expectations of 'work' partly accounted for lack of success with this method:

Youngsters here look at work as purely really putting pen to paper...and funnily enough they don't consider the discussion side of it as part of work and as part of the learning situation....I think this is in the past where some people have fallen down here, in that they've tended to...the intention was right, but the kids didn't recognise it as important to what they were doing, they felt they spent far too much time talking and not actually getting down to the nitty-gritty.

In another interview he claimed that when he had tried small group discussion work:

I don't know whether it's me or not, but I haven't found them all that successful in that I felt that I've not got the response I would have hoped for....There tends to be a reluctance on the kids part to get involved....A lot depends on the size of group. In fairly bigish sized groups it's very difficult, because there's always a hard core, and possibly here it's a harder core than you would get elsewhere, who are not really interested in getting involved and they disrupt what the others are trying to do. So I

think it is difficult. I could name names here of kids who if you tried that they would be forever messing around and you would spend your time...you've either got to ignore them, or you've got to do something about it. Now I couldn't ignore them and if I'm going to do something about it it means the rest of the group will suffer while I deal with that particular person.

Alan Moore did try to use small group work especially with classes that were more 'responsive', but admitted that it was often limited and was never the central form of his class organisation:

Generally speaking it's me organising them and not too much leeway for them to do too much....Generally it's me being authoritarian, but not in an overtly authoritarian way in the same way that at (last school) you could go in with your piece of chalk and lecture, here it's much more chivying authoritarianism, but it's me in control really.

So resource-based, independent learning, teacher as adviser rather than transmitter of knowledge, egalitarian teacher-student relationships, a greater use of group discussion and problem solving, in short a more 'progressive' pedagogy, was rejected by the Humanities teachers. What kind of approach did they advocate? Stephen Parker explained:

I don't see myself in the role that I think teachers are now supposed to see themselves, where they are a resource that sits there and you know provides the relevant points. I suppose I've got a more old-fashioned approach, I suppose a more didactic approach. It's just a habit I've got into, and also the fact that I find it easier to teach in that way...So I think for a variety of reasons I see my role as a sort of...almost the old authority figure rather than...whatever the opposite term is.

He described his position in the classroom as a 'benevolent despot' and emphasised his role in providing a 'framework of order' so that students could work. His method was, he said, 'fairly formal'. This meant three things. First, he distanced himself from the students:

Whatever you say we can't be equal, I'm not their big brother or their gang leader, I'm a teacher, and there's a difference between the teacher and the students or pupils or children or whatever you want to call them.

Second, he maintained firm control of curriculum content and student pace of working, generally spending the first part of each lesson addressing the whole class on the subject matter of the lesson before setting them individual written exercises to do:

I decide what we're going to do in a lesson and I try to make it clear to them exactly what I expect them to be doing....I tend to talk to them, and give them something to do, maybe talk to them as their going through it, hoping to try and reinforce what we'd said initially. Now what they're doing maybe writing, it may be copying, it may be answering questions, it may be drawing and so on, but that's the kind of general framework that I use.

Third, he provided a clear and consistently enforced set of classroom rules:

I try to be consistent. The children have got to know what to expect, and to know the limits within which they can operate, and I think you've got to lay those down as firmly as you can and try and insist that they work within them....I don't expect them to wander about the classroom willy-nilly, just get up in the middle of something and wander off. They know they can speak to each other about what's going on, but I don't like long conversations, I don't like things thrown across the classroom, I don't like kids sitting their doing nothing. Just basic classroom behaviour. They know that and I would hope that, they may not like the way I deal with them, but at least I think they accept the fact that I deal with them all in the same way...I might be nasty to them, but I'm nasty to them all, at least it's fair in that respect.

Stephen Barker felt that his 'structured and more formal' approach:

At least gives them something to relate to. They know where they are and what's expected of them and they know how they can respond and what will

happen if they don't respond in appropriate ways. So they've got a certain amount of security. You might say that's not what they want. It's almost like being institutionalised, but at least they know there are limits placed for them, markers put out for them, and within that framework then they can have a certain amount of freedom to develop as they want...I don't think you can have a totally blank canvas that they can roam across. I don't think at that age they can provide markers for themselves.

In this way he had developed a pedagogy which 'suits me and appears to suit the children', fitting the practical world of the classroom at Milltown High. He derived reassurance from the fact that the other Humanities teachers had adopted similar approaches.

Peter Mills while stressing the importance of 'flexibility' in teaching style also said that he adopted a 'fairly formal' approach in the way he set out his room, approached students and conducted lessons, and his lessons did seem to have a standard format. He advocated class based teaching where 'you as a teacher are in control' and where 'you can stand up there and show that you know what you are talking about and what you're doing'. There was a need to be 'structured and organised' and to lay down clear behavioural guidelines so that 'you start off from a controlled situation'. Lessons were best organised:

With a very formal content, which I choose...and then I talk to the whole class about what we're going to do, with I hope some involvement of the youngsters. Then they get on and as they work I move around the group asking questions, picking points out as they work and so on.

He did, however, attempt to vary the types of tasks that students were set, and sometimes encouraged, mainly for motivational reasons, students to discuss as a class their ideas about the content of the lesson.

Alan Moore claimed to adopt a variety of teaching techniques, but conceded that his overall approach was very similar to the others. He argued that he was 'willing to change in curriculum terms, but I still have a fairly authoritarian view of classrooms'. 'I still want to direct', he said. He too emphasised the importance of 'formality', of classroom rules and firm teacher

control over curriculum content, the pacing of students work and interaction in the classroom:

I won't let them get away with anything, and in the end it works...They know that they're going to cop it if they're unpleasant, idle or not doing their best....Most of them like being chased up, they like to think they are in a safe environment really and if I sat back and let them do what they wanted a lot of them would be more frightened. So they like to think I'm going to chase up people who do things wrong or aren't working hard enough.

The Humanities teachers then advocated a more 'traditional' approach to pedagogy. They emphasised whole class teaching, often followed by individual, quiet seatwork, in which they strongly 'framed' curriculum content and controlled the pace of student work, 'formal' teacher-student relationships, and strong control over student interaction in the classroom. Whilst they made some concessions to 'discussions', they preferred these to be whole class affairs, teacher rather than student-centred. Interestingly their approach had not changed with the introduction of mixed-ability grouping. They felt that constraints iminged too heavily upon them.

The Humanities Teachers' Conception of their Students

How did the Humanities teachers view their students? The individualism which characterised the views of the English teachers was also a feature of the talk of the Humanities teachers (3). Again there was a reluctance to categorise students or to talk about them in generalised ways. 'It all comes down to individuals really', said Peter Mills, and 'it's very difficult to talk about them in a general way', said Stephen Barker.

When we talked about ethnic differences Peter Mills found it 'almost impossible to distinguish between them'. As Stephen Barker said:

The differences have not been as great as I thought they would be before I came. I mean, I had taught a few children of West Indian background before I came. There were more Asian children at (last school)...but not a great many West Indians, only 2 or 3 in a year. So I thought, you know, and they said, 'up at the drop of a hat, quick temper', and really it hasn't been like that...I'm sure if you put bags over their heads and gloves on, from the way they behave it would be very difficult in the classroom to pick out which ethnic group they come from...The fact that there are children of different ethnic backgrounds makes me more aware of things I would say or the way I approach things, but I'm more concerned with the child as an individual. I suppose you can say 'Well how can you think of a child as an individual without thinking of their background?', but in a way you tend to think of them as individuals primarily and then backgrounds as a secondary factor....I wouldn't go 'Oh, I've handled one differently because they're of one ethnic background, and another one another way because they're from a different background.' It doesn't work like that as far as I'm concerned. I mean I handle John Peacock the way I do because he's the kind of kid that he is, regardless of his background. They're all different. Angela is nothing like the same kind of kid as Lorraine, but their ethnic backgrounds are similar. So it's more the individual child than their background.

Although Alan Moore felt 'West Indian kids seem more content with being happy and dabbing and shouting and being more physically active', it was a comment

which he felt was based upon 'limited experience of teaching ethnic groups' and a 'gross generalisation'.

When the Humanities teachers did provide generalised descriptions of their students it was, as with the English teachers, often in terms of their 'problems' and the 'problems' that they posed for them as teachers. Alan Moore was probably the most extreme in his view:

Our kids are more emotionally disturbed than I would ever have thought or that people could have imagined...In terms of motivation and level of ability that didn't come as a shock. The emotional disturbances that our kids have did come as a shock...The constant demanding of attention and sulking if they don't get it, sulking, not in a quiet sense but in a rude sense. The inability to wait until you've got time to talk to them, whereas in most schools you can actually stop the shouting out bit, and they learn that they don't shout out and when you've got a minute you'll go over to them and help them. Here they don't have the ability...because they find the work difficult or because they find sitting still difficult, I don't know which, they demand attention and if they don't get it immediately on a one-to-one....then they will walk around, they may start throwing things around, they'll start throwing things across the room. They may shout, 'You never take any notice of me', or whatever, and it's that sort of insecurity that produces then other reactions in other kids, and winds other kids up. There are other kids, and there are more than we should have, who you will tell them off and they will kick the wall, lay on the floor and scream or whatever. Or kids who you will put outside and they'll climb up the door frame and peer in over the top, or they'll refuse to leave the room, or they'll slam the door, or they'll become very violent or very abusive or both.

Stephen Barker argued that it was 'the general lack of motivation' that stood out which meant that many of the students 'are not unpleasant, but will do as little as they can get away with'. Many had 'limited horizons of what they can do and feel that school can't give them what they want...they don't have much regard for the school'. Peter Mills explained that:

We have all types of children here, but the balance is different. We have far more children who have emotional problems as a result of home background, which affects them all in different ways. Some become very disruptive, others have very low motivation, others don't bother to come into school at all. All schools have these sorts of problems but Milltown High has a greater proportion of these children.

Like the English teachers such 'problems' were explained by reference to a wide variety of circumstances in the students' environment and home background, but the Humanities teachers refrained from the sort of political critique that was put forward by several of the English teachers. They adopted what Grace (1978) calls 'a neutral-explanatory stance' in which they 'eschewed "blaming" working class homes, but they also abstained from "blaming" the wider constraints of the socio-economic system within which they and their pupils were located' (p.176). Alan Moore's views were perhaps typical:

I think part of it (the students' problems) must be an insecurity at home or a...I put most of it down to insecurity....that they're not getting from somewhere else where other people would have got it. Their ability to cope with stressful situations is very low because they don't have a stable and solid emotional base to base that on...and I think kids who come from split homes or homes where parents are out of work suffer because there is already a tense atmosphere at home and consequently less time for them to get the help and support they need.

But again, as with the English teachers, such a view was not used to justify a generalised low expectation of students' academic potential. 'We have children here who can do as well as any, if they would put their minds to it,' said Stephen Barker, and Peter Mills thought that, 'some of the children here are very bright, it's just that they are often badly influenced by their friends and find it very difficult to break out of that'. All the Humanities teachers stressed the range of students that attended Milltown High. The positive terms (or 'fraternal images' as Grace (1978) calls them) that the English teachers used, however, were largely absent from their talk. Their view of the students was more often negative. Many of the students annoyed, frustrated or, as Stephen Barker often said, 'irked' them. They were far from 'ideal'. But despite

this sometimes they did emphasise positive aspects. As Peter Mills said, 'There is something about the kids, even though you drag your hair out in the end you feel compelled to work with them. There is something there'.

The Practice of Humanities Teaching

In this section I will describe some of the Humanities teaching that I observed in the classroom. I focused mainly on the courses that the Humanities teachers suggested were more 'Multicultural' or 'Anti-Racist', and mainly on the work of Stephen Barker and Peter Mills as Alan Moore was reluctant to have me observe his lessons and left the school in July 1986 in the middle of my field work. Again I must emphasise that this account is not intended to provide a completely comprehensive picture of the work of the department, but I hope that I can provide a flavour of the teaching that occurred and the way the teachers incorporated ideas of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education into their practice.

Stephen Barker

Stephen Barker was a quiet, reticent man who played little part in staffroom social life or public school politics, preferring to spend the bulk of his time in his classroom. However, he was highly regarded by many staff for his conscientious and 'professional' approach to his work, his calm and consistent methods of dealing with the students, and his efficient and orderly management of his classroom. Many admired his ability to run quiet and well disciplined lessons where students 'worked' to a high standard. He himself was proud of the success of the department in providing 'a calm working atmosphere' which he felt had resulted in good exam results over the past few years.

Although he confessed that increasingly his teaching had become 'just a job', he attempted to provide what he felt were 'consistent and well-run lessons', which, he argued, was what the majority of students and their parents wanted. He thought many of the changes that David Benyon was attempting to implement were inappropriate and ill-prepared, and was concerned about the weakening of his department by the placing of 2nd year Humanities in the Integrated Curriculum. As we have seen, he regarded the application of David Benyon's ideas on pedagogy to Milltown High with considerable scepticism, preferring his own approach which had developed over 20 years of classroom teaching.

I observed Stephen Barker teaching two units of the Humanities curriculum. The first was a sample of 9 lessons from the 4th year O/CSE level course unit entitled 'People and Work', and the second was 17 lessons with a 3rd year class who were studying the topic 'Development and the Third World'. The former was apparently less 'Multicultural', but I was interested in the sort of pedagogy Stephen Barker employed and the way in which notions of Multiculturalism or Anti-Racism might permeate the 'ordinary' Humanities curriculum. The latter represented more fully the department's approach on these issues.

The 4th year group were a top band class. The Humanities department, in collaboration with Science, divided the students into 3 bands in the 4th year. In Humanities the top two bands took the same exam course. A small number of students in the top band were entered for O level, the rest for C.S.E. The lower band took a non-exam course with teachers from the Learning Support department (4). The work of this group had been marred by the teachers' industrial action. They had lost approximately 15 lessons during the previous term and this pattern continued. Classes frequently did not take place or student numbers were drastically reduced as students were sent home earlier in the day because of strikes or absent staff. Much of the work that Stephen Barker had planned for the group was not completed because of lack of time and planning was extremely difficult as often a different set of students would be present at each lesson. The students themselves also frequently exploited the situation, arriving late or truanting from lessons. All this increased the pressure on Stephen Barker to orientate his lessons to 'getting through as much work as possible' so that the students would have enough course work in their folders for assessment.

The unit was based around the Geography for the Young School Leaver (GYSL) course, although Stephen Barker utilised a number of different textbooks as well as the resources in the GYSL unit. It was divided into 4 sub-units -

- 1) Why Work - which addressed the reasons why people work, the distinctions between primary, secondary and tertiary industries, and changes in employment patterns.

- 2) Patterns of Work - which looked at location of work places through case studies of a farm, steel works and department store (all in Britain).

- 3) Change in Work - which examined factors which influence changing patterns of employment and location of industry from exhaustion of physical resources

to political decisions, through a variety of examples in different parts of the world .

4) Work and Environment - which looked at the changes in natural environment and pollution which often result from human economic activity.

The main intention of the unit appears to have been the teaching of primarily geographical concepts, knowledge and skills. A considerable amount of time involved students practicing the skills of graphicacy and map work. A consideration of historical or social scientific approaches to the topic of 'Work' was largely (though not completely) absent. This geographical orientation reflected Stephen Barker's own subject specialism. It was also because when the syllabus had been established the CSE examining board had specified that the course must include two 'geographical units', and because the available resources were slanted in this direction. As Stephen Barker commented, 'When you come into a department you've got to work within the constraints of the materials that are available'.

On the basis of the unit work scheme and the lessons I observed I felt the curriculum content of the unit tended to be rather one-sided. Whilst examining economic change and some examples of conflict over environmental issues, there was a tendency to present a rather rosy, uncontroversial picture of the British economy. Conflicts which occur in the social relations of the work were not included, nor were issues concerned with the inequalities which arise in industrial societies from ownership and control of production and differential occupational rewards. Changes in the nature of 'work' were largely presented as occurring without conflict. In a section on the iron and steel industry, for example, change in the location of factories was presented both in the written teaching materials and a television programme as an inevitable development proceeding naturally with the minimum of controversy. There was little hint in the programme or the materials used that such changes are frequently fought over and conflicts of interest are often intense. Technological progress related to the siting of raw materials and markets was said to determine the 'best' location of the industry, but the question of 'best' for whom was not raised. The movement of industry to the 'best' location was presented as inevitable, a process which workers had to accept - 'Thousands of jobs will have to go as the industry faces the facts that this is no longer the best place for producing iron and steel', said the television programme. There was also a tendency in the written materials used for technological progress and

change to be presented as natural and of benefit to all. For example, in one text book under the heading 'Science and Technology' the students read:

Efforts are always being made to increase production and to make industry more efficient. Inventions over the years enable more and more work to be done by machines. Despite mass production and automation, however, men are still needed to work the machines and to do various jobs that machines cannot do.

Nations compete with each other, and to this end they call upon science to help them make their industries more efficient, and consequently more productive. Many industrial firms carry out their own research to try to increase production. Scientists and technicians are always suggesting new ideas and finding better techniques, or methods, of production.

The influence of Multiculturalism or Anti-Racism over the unit appears to have been slim. The only concession made to Multiculturalism was the use of occasional examples from 'other countries' to illustrate points, but even these were infrequent as most of the unit concentrated on work activities and changes in work in the British Isles and none of the example cited concerned ethnic minority groups in Britain. The influence of changing patterns of economic activities on migration patterns, the experiences of ethnic minority people in the work place, and issues of discrimination in the labour market, all central to the idea of Anti-Racist Education, were not considered.

My observation was mainly during the first two sub-units, although, because of the time problems mentioned above, the group did not cover the whole unit. As with most of Stephen Barker's lessons whole class teaching was the norm. His lessons were always well planned and organised and were generally orderly. Often he spent 10 minutes before the lesson setting out books and folders or T.V. or film projector, if they were to be used, so that everything would be ready when students arrived and the minimum amount of class time was taken up with the distribution of equipment. His room was large and well furnished with working tables which he had organised in rows facing his desk which was in front of the blackboard. Students were normally allowed to sit with friends, but Stephen Barker would frequently use the space in the room to split up potential 'trouble makers', by sitting them at tables by

themselves or at the 2 desks which faced the wall at the front and were specifically reserved for this purpose (this was a technique he more often used with the younger students).

After 'settling them down' lessons generally started with a short talk to the whole class on the lesson's content. Stephen Barker took complete responsibility for the transmission of knowledge and control of curriculum content. His initial talk was sometimes combined with a brief, recitation style, question and answer session (5). Students were expected to 'pay attention' and 'listen', and answer questions when selected by the teacher. Questions were usually designed to elicit their memory of the knowledge content of the previous lesson or knowledge of the subject matter under consideration, information known to the teacher, rather than knowledge, experiences, or views, unknown to him. In this type of teaching, as Hammersley (1974) notes, it is the teacher's talk which 'officially constitutes the lesson'. Moreover, 'Pupils are officially limited to making or trying to make contributions to his talk, their participation is not on their own terms but on his; they are expected to listen to what he says and follow his development of the topic in order to "learn"' (p365).

Stephen Barker often explained concepts that were to be introduced, went through the material (text, graphs, maps, etc), and then set the tasks that he wanted the class to do in the lesson, putting instructions up on the blackboard. Frequently exercises involved copying diagrams, maps or drawings, or transferring data from one medium to another (e.g. from a table of figures to a graph) or answering comprehension questions on the text or on his talk. Students were expected to complete these exercises individually often in a specified amount of time. If they did not finish they were asked to take work home or copy up from a friend. Stephen Barker attempted to keep the whole class together as much as possible, although during the height of the industrial action this proved very difficult. Sometimes he would produce a worksheet which contained several exercises and students would work at this for 2 or 3 lessons, but often, even in these lessons, Stephen Barker would introduce a particular section of the worksheet in each lesson and indicate to the students where they should be up to. Often he would break off individual work in the middle of a lesson to explain a particular point or the next section of work to the whole class, usually at a time when he discovered that

several members of the class were finishing or close to finishing a particular section. Speed appeared to be dictated by the progress of the average student.

Worksheets (or blackboard instructions) were of the type described by Barnes (1976), and served to, as Barnes says, 'isolate the learner with his task' and 'keep control firmly in the teacher's hands'. Students were instructed to copy maps or diagrams, answer comprehension questions or 'rehearse' information which they obtained from the indicated pages of the text book or resource sheet. In this way Stephen Barker strongly controlled the content of his lessons and the pacing of students' work. Exercises were often designed to be rather mechanical, involving little thought at least at their beginning, so that less able or less motivated students could 'get on' without the excuse that the work was too difficult. Disruption which could arise from this source was therefore eliminated.

Students were expected to work by themselves with the minimum of interaction with their peers. During this 'working' time Stephen Barker generally patrolled the class or surveyed them from various positions around the room. He was quick to spot outbreaks of talking or potential disorder and moved quickly to defuse them either by directing students back to the task in hand or questioning them about their work or by merely hovering around them (6). Students were expected to ask him not their neighbour by raising their hand if they had a problem or query about the work or the nature of the task. This they usually did and much of Stephen Barker's time was spent moving around the classroom briefly answering student questions which generally concerned what they had to do or how a particular exercise was to be completed. In fact most individual teacher-student interaction was of this sort. Stephen Barker rarely initiated individual interaction on the subject matter of the lesson and he rarely marked work during lesson time preferring to leave himself free for the roles of 'policing' (A.Hargreaves 1979), task supervision and answering questions. As a result his lessons were usually quiet and calm with students working away at their individual tasks (7).

The following transcript illustrates the methods that Stephen Barker employed with his 4th year group. This was their 4th lesson on the topic 'People and Work'. Previous lessons had been concerned with 'Images of Work', 'Why people work' and 'Three types of work - Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Sectors'.

(As the students drift in from afternoon registration they pick up their folders from the front desk and sit down. There is a lot of chatting and socialising. One or two start working. Stephen Barker stands at the door surveying the corridor, waiting for the last few to arrive. After 5 minutes he closes the door and walks to the front of the class and leans on his desk facing them).

SB - Right put your pens and pencils down those of you that have started (the chatting slowly subsides SB waits)...I want you to stop work from yesterday, leave the previous work...I want us to start together at the same point. For the benefit of those who have been away, what we are doing is looking at different types of work. There are 3 groups - primary, secondary and tertiary...(he briefly recaps explaining the meaning of the 3 terms)...We've done a general background so far. We now want to look at work in Britain. We want to see how many people work in each sector...From the work you have done on the Third World and Development you would expect most people in Britain to be working in tertiary industries. Put the heading 'Work in Britain'...a simple beginning. Copy the pie chart on page 70 showing how many people work in different sectors in Britain

(SB quickly gives out text books, some students wander out to get pencils, rulers, etc which are arranged on SB's desk. One or two ask for compasses and SB gets a few pairs from his draw).

SB - Right you all know what to do. It should take about 5 to 10 minutes.

(SB writes the title and page number on the blackboard. There's some chatting initially as they work, but this soon subsides. SB wanders checking they are all doing the correct thing. He answers one or two queries like 'does it have to be exact' and responds to requests for equipment. When they are settled SB goes round giving out a duplicated sheet which has on it a tables of figures showing changes in weekly hours of work and information on job satisfaction. He then writes a second title on the board 'Who owns industry in Britain?'. One girl asks if she should write this down. SB says no, he wants them to think about this next. He surveys the class from the front, tells Leslie to stop talking. A few minutes later...)

SB - Right most people should have finished. While you finish think about this question on the board 'Who owns British industry?'

DARREN - (calling out) I do

SB - Well Darren's obviously got a fairly simple answer. The rest of you think a little more deeply about it...Right leave your drawing for a moment. Think about the question. Think about a company like Westland..

(At this point several students call out. One shouts Colonel Gadaffi, some one else shouts share holders, and several of the other students begin to talk amongst themselves. SB seems to abandon any idea of having a discussion about the question and proceeds to explain that some companies in Britain are owned by shareholders and others are owned by the government. He explains the difference between private companies and nationalised industries. He concludes...)

SB - ...So think about who owns industry in Britain. When you have finished put that heading and then answer these questions.

(SB writes the questions on the board 1) What is a nationalised industry?, 2) What is a private company? Try to give examples of each. He then goes around the class looking at what the students are writing, he repeats his explanation briefly for individuals. A few minutes later,...)

SB - Right can I have your attention again. I've been looking at what at what you have put...You should know, you should be aware of who owns industry. It's in the news all the time...about the government selling off industries. Nationalised industries are owned by the state, private companies by individuals or groups of people (he goes on to give several examples of each)...Most of you have grasped the distinction I think. One minute to finish off. I want to spend the last part of the lesson on this sheet.

(A boy asks who Westlands are owned by. SB explains that it is a private company and that Americans and Europeans are competing to buy it).

SB - Right I want us to spend the last 10 minutes on these duplicated sheets (he explains that one of the tables shows weekly hours of work) What changes Leslie have taken place in hours of work?

LESLIE - They've gone down.

SB - Yes they have reduced. We'll look at why later (he explains the difference in the figures between actual and normal hours of work and then how to do a line graph using both sets of figures marking them on the graph in separate colours. He tells them to complete the graph and then to answer questions 1 and 2 on the sheet. A boy asks what to do. 'Do what it tells you to there, says SB)

(The last 15 minutes of the lesson are taken up in silent individual work on constructing the graph and answering the questions as SB wanders around the class watching and checking. When the bell goes SB allows individuals to put their equipment and folders away and leave).

(field notes)

All the 9 lessons that I observed with this class were similar (with one exception which involved watching a television programme). There were minor variations according to the number of student present. When few students were there Stephen Barker allowed them to work at their own speed and spent more time on individual instruction, but this was not his normal way of working, he was forced to adopt it because of the disruption caused by the industrial action. The content of the curriculum and the pace of student work was heavily controlled by the teacher. He made little use of discussion of curriculum content either with the whole class, small groups or with individuals. Student participation was minimal and the bulk of public classroom talk was taken up by teacher exposition, task instruction

and brief question and answer sessions. The majority of the time students were expected to work individually at rather mechanical tasks. In this way classroom control was maintained (8) and a 'calm, working atmosphere' was achieved.

Stephen Barker adopted a similar style of teaching with his 3rd year group. They were, he felt, a 'difficult' and 'unpredictable class', their behaviour depending on 'the individuals who turn up and the mood those individuals are in'. They also did not have 'quite as much ability' as other 3rd year groups he had taught in the past. All of the lessons I observed were based on whole class teaching, directed and heavily controlled by the teacher. As with the 4th year group, Stephen Barker tended to divide lessons up into a period of teacher exposition, whole class question and answer or reading from a text book, followed by individual student seat work from a work sheet or written instructions on the blackboard during which he patrolled the class, occasionally assisting individuals with the exercises. Tasks set again frequently involved copying drawings or diagrams or 'rehearsing' information from a text book. Stephen Barker did not use small group work and gave few opportunities for students to control their learning, articulate their views or collaborate together in interpretation of the subject matter. The following lesson was typical.

(The class have come straight up from registration together, SB is by the door as they come in, exercise books are out on the tables. Students sit down and there is an air of sleepy calm about the room, first lesson in the morning I suppose. One girl complains that a boy has taken her seat. 'It's not your seat, it's where you usually sit, find another place, come on it's not musical chairs', says SB,...The class settle, SB, standing at the front facing them, begins,...)

SB - Right. Think back a long time ago, last Thursday. We were looking at the Third World and we talked about what that meant and why it might be a better name than something like 'the Underdeveloped World'. We looked at all the words that are used. Then we looked at the Third World, at some photographs and we talked about some of the features of Third world countries as compared with richer countries and we spent most of the time talking about food. Now the Third World is short of food. You have seen pictures of Ethiopia and the Sudan on T.V...But is the world short of food? What can we say about the distribution of food? Clifford is there enough food in the word to go around? Is something the matter Darren?

DARREN - I haven't got a pen.

SB - You don't need a pen now. Clifford's telling you something (no response from Clifford) Oh, he's obviously forgotten. Pamela you tell him.

PAMELA(P) - Yes, er I mean no.

SB - Do you mean yes or do you mean no?

P - Yes,

SB - Did you hear that Darren or were you too busy talking? She said that food supplies are not distributed equally, There are inequalities, it's not shared equally, Which gets most Trevor?

TREVOR - The North,

SB - Right and we said that if there were 21 bags of grain how would the bags be shared out? How are they divided Patricia? (no response from Patricia) Billy-Joanne?

BILLY-JOANNE(BJ) - There would be 11 in the North and 10 to the South,

SB - Yes that's right, but that's fair isn't it? (several hands go up, A boy shouts out)

BOY - There are more people in the South,

SB - So it's not a fair share is it, Those were the main points we were talking about, We finished off looking at a diagram which compared what an average American and an average Indian person eats, Do they eat the same Jason? (no response) Who ate the most Vincent?

VINCENT(V) - The American,

SB - Right I want to go on from there today, Can you find page 15....Come on Carvil page 15 (some chatting starts) Sh Sh... There's the diagram, If you look at it we're saying not only that the amount of food varies, what else varies?

DARREN - The variety,

SB - Very good...These are the points we discussed, Most of you seem to have remembered them well, Now to make certain I want you to write them down...Put the heading 'Food' and from the blackboard answer those questions in your own words, We have been talking about them all so you should know the answers (he reads the questions written on the blackboard 1) Is there enough food in the world to go around?

2) Why do some people go hungry?

3) If the world's food supply is represented by 21 bags of grain how are they divided between north and South?) Right make a start please, The date is the 15th, I know people need pens, Put your hand up if you need a pen (he distributes pens) Right any problems put your hand up and ask me, you don't disturb anyone, When you get on you really work well,

(While the class work quietly SB writes further questions on the blackboard, occasionally turning and surveying them, shushing anyone who talks, The questions are - 4) Why is the division of food not equal?

5) Copy the drawings of the scales with food on from page 15, He then wanders around the class, occasionally helping students who ask for assistance and distributing equipment, If students start talking or appear to go off the task set he moves over to them, hovers or asks them where they are up to, After several minutes he writes a further two questions on the blackboard - 6) What do you notice about the amount of food eaten in the two countries? 7) What do you notice about the variety of food?

After 25 minutes of individual work several students begin to get a little restless and some chatting starts, SB declares,...)

SB - It would appear that many in the class are close to finishing, You have worked very well, Two or three minutes to finish off now, Nobody waste time, If you have finished get on with some reading, Read pages 15 and 16,...(the chatting subsides, SB moves to the front of the class and surveys the room, A few minutes later,...)

SB - I would like us to spend the last few minutes looking at a map on page 16 and 17, Can you spend a few minutes looking at it now, It's a funny map, Try to understand how the shapes are drawn,...(pauses for 30 seconds)...Lets look at it those who have finished,...It has been constructed not as the shape of the actual countries, What they have tried to do is to draw a map to match the population of the country, So a bigger shape means a bigger population, Britain is bigger than normal size and so is India, Countries with a smaller population are much smaller, Then it is shaded to show the amount of food per person in calories,...(he continues explaining the map for the next couple of minutes until the bell goes and he dismisses the students one at a time) (Field notes)

Most of the lessons that I observed with this group were similarly organised. The exceptions were 3 lessons where the class watched films from the L.E.A. film library. Following viewing Stephen Barker held a brief question and answer session based on recall of the film's contents. The films themselves whilst related in some way to the subject matter of the unit appeared also to provide light relief from ordinary classroom work for Stephen Barker and the other two Humanities teachers who brought their classes along. They were, perhaps inevitably, somewhat dated. One consisted of a comparison between the natural environment and farming economies of the Swiss Alps and Peruvian Andes. The film, rather like a tourist brochure, focused on local farming methods, customs and crafts, presenting an unproblematic, conflict-free, even romantic picture of community life. Modern technology we were told was the main factor in accounting for the different adaptations made by the respective communities to a similar natural environment.

A second film was entitled 'Our Asian Neighbours - Harvest at Nong Lub' and showed, in a very similar way, life in a rural Thai village during the rice harvest. The focus was on farming methods and the village economy. Again a consensual image of village life was presented. A third film, 'Miners of Bolivia', presented a less rosy picture focusing on the problems of tin mining and the poverty of mining communities in the Andes.

Difficulties were created, the film suggested, by the altitude, mountainous environment, poor communications and primitive technology, and the miners themselves were presented as victims of a harsh environment, exploitation and lack of opportunities.

However, these films were really interludes in the unit of work. What about the overall curriculum content? There was no scheme of work for this unit so individual teachers largely planned their own programme around the resources available. Stephen Barker used two basic text books, 'Different Worlds' by Tony Crisp (1975) and 'The World Now' by Andrew Reed (1984). The first book was clearly a product of the development of the 'new' geography with its emphasis on quantification, graphicacy, etc. However, practice in the manipulation of statistics, graphs, tables and maps appears to have taken precedence over the understanding of issues and problems. The students were provided with range of material indicating inequalities in food supply, health and wealth, but little in way of explanation. Explanations that were provided were sometimes rather facile. In a section on apartheid in South Africa and Rhodesia (the book was first published in 1975 and reprinted several times, the last time in 1983) for example, under the heading 'Birds of a feather flock together' students were informed that 'many of the world's problems are caused by people flocking together because they have the same skin colour, religion, politics, language and customs.' The second book was far more detailed and sophisticated in the analysis offered. It provided a wealth of data, case studies, analysis and explanation of issues affecting the 'Developing World'. Stephen Barker's practice, however, was not to follow the sections in a text book (he did not use the section quoted above for example), but was to dip into each book for a graph, map, diagram or section of text which he thought was appropriate.

He began with 3 lessons, which I did not observe, in which he described differences in wealth and population between the 'North' and 'South', talked about the different terms used like 'development', and 'Third World', and listed some of the 'Symptoms of Inequality' such as amount of food, number of doctors and different life styles. Students did exercises in which they coloured world maps showing the rich north and the poor south, and compared their homes with that of a poor family in Nairobi. The first lesson I observed was the one described above which concentrated

on inequalities in world food supply. The next two lessons were devoted to the same issue. This appeared to provide plenty of opportunity for the analysis and drawing of maps, graphs and diagrams, and the calculation of comparative statistics highlighting north/south inequality. The different types of inequality between developed and developing countries was the basic idea that Stephen Barker wanted to transmit in these lessons. However, he did not offer or discuss with the class potential explanations for these inequalities. He seemed content to describe them and get the students to understand the statistics. The possibility for speculation and discussion of competing explanations about why such inequalities exist was not taken up. Such a descriptive approach has been criticised by Klien (1985) and Hicks (1980, 1981) because of its concentration on the symptoms of inequality and neglect of explanations. They argue that the central issues are ignored and the way left open for simplistic, even racist, explanations to develop in the students' minds. Stephen Barker justified his concentration on description because he felt that the low average ability and the behavioural problems of the class would make it difficult to tackle such complex issues effectively. He also said he did not wish to pre-empt work on this topic which was planned for the 4th and 5th year. But interestingly he did, in the lesson described above, introduce the idea of 'fairness' in the distribution of world resources. He implied that the present inequality was unfair which, of course, is a political judgement and perhaps open to alternative interpretations that were not in fact raised.

The next two lessons consisted of a case study of a farming family in Zambia based on material in a book called 'North-South Lifestyles - Case Studies from the South' by Arnold Turner (1985). This book appeared to adopt the approach which Klien (1985) calls a 'non-racist perspective' focusing in some detail on the everyday life of individual families in various parts of the developing world. Its intention was, as the introductory notes to teachers explained, to 'illustrate patterns of life (of families) which have been influenced by their economic and social status and by their beliefs' and to 'give some idea of the diversity and range of lifestyles within a category as well as their commonality'. Each chapter contained a case study of one family, combining photographs, graphs, tables, diagrams and text into an attractively produced book.

Unfortunately, on reading the case studies contained in the book one is left with the impression that most of the families live in an unproblematic, conflict free world. In an effort to portray the life-styles of people in other countries in a positive way, the book presents a rather rosy and optimistic view of the families, and whilst there is a lot of technical information about how families make a living, the sorts of food they eat and the sorts of houses they live in, we are told little about the social structures or political organisation of their communities, about conflicts within those communities or about social change, and how this affects the families. In short, the image presented is de-contextualised and consensual. Interestingly, also, 11 of the 12 case studies are centred around the life of the male head of the family.

Stephen Barker chose to spend 2 lessons getting the students to read and answer a number of comprehension questions on this case study mainly focusing on the ways in which the Zambian family produced food. Following this he went on to spend two lessons considering the idea of what sort of technology might be appropriate to farming in the Third World and introduced the idea of 'intermediate technology'. Either side of these lessons he showed the two films on farming mentioned above. He then moved back to the notion of inequality, teaching a lesson which focused on a comparison of Britain and Bangladesh through the consideration of a variety of facts and figures - size, population growth, population density, calorie intake per head, number of doctors per head, etc.

Following this he taught two lessons on population growth and finally four lessons on urban growth and rural-urban migration in the Third World. Here he considered push/pull factors affecting migration, the interpretation of population statistics and some of the problems young migrants face when they arrive in Third World cities, the latter through a moving story of the life of a poor teenage street vendor in Dar es Salaam taken from a booklet produced by a local 'Development Education Project'. Again most of the content of these lessons was descriptive and provided plenty of opportunity for copying drawings and graphs.

The curriculum selected, then, began to raise some of issues surrounding the relationship between the developed and the developing world. Although in some of the materials students were presented with a consensual, conflict-free image of Third world communities, Stephen Barker

emphasised the problematic nature of the inequalities which exist between rich and poor countries. Thus he introduced the students to an important and controversial question of social justice. Unfortunately the teaching style he adopted (or felt he had to adopt) with the group did not allow very much discussion of the issues involved. He concentrated on description and the skills of data interpretation, and used exercises such as copying maps, graphs and diagrams primarily as a means of enhancing classroom control. This meant that the students had little opportunity to ask questions, raise issues or voice their own ideas. Their perceptions and understanding of development issues remained largely unexplored and their engagement with the curriculum was limited.

Peter Mills

Peter Mills was a senior member of staff. He was an experienced classroom teacher having worked in a number of Milltown secondary schools for nearly 30 years, 9 of them at Milltown High. As such he was an established and respected figure in the school, what one young teacher described as 'part of the backbone of the school'.

The majority of the lessons I observed with him were with a 5th year top band group of students working on the unit 'Persection and Prejudice' for their C.S.E. exam. This unit, I was told, was the department's main contribution to Anti-Racist Education. Peter Mills told me that he was 'attempting to make the children aware of the different types of persection and prejudice and the different forms that they have taken'. I saw 12 lessons with this group. I also observed 4 lessons with a 2nd year mixed ability class who were studying the unit on the Caribbean.

The 5th year unit, designed by Peter Mills when the integrated Humanities course had been introduced in 1981, was a whole term's work and was divided into 4 main parts. First, there was a brief introduction of 3 lessons in which basic terms were defined. The second, third, and fourth parts consisted of studies of Apartheid in South Africa, Nazi Germany and The Struggle for Women's Rights in the late 19th and early 20th Century. My observation was largely during the first and second parts.

As Peter Mills was a history specialist and the syllabus specified two largely historical topics, the unit was historical in orientation. It utilised materials from a variety of sources. In the section on South Africa he made use of a set of materials entitled 'Segregation by Race' that the ex-head of department had obtained from a London school. It included basic background information on the racial categories of the South African population, the history of the country, laws passed by the South African government to control political protest, newspaper reports and extracts from novels concerning the system of racial segregation and discrimination, views of apartheid from a black person and a white person, extracts from Mandela's statement to the dock during his trial in 1964, and a series of source materials on the Sharpville shootings in 1960. Whilst the material was somewhat dated, failing to provide information on or utilise more contemporary developments, and suffered because

of the poor quality of the reproduction, it did provide a fairly accurate and personalised, if simple, description of South African society and its inequalities and conflicts. In fact issues of inequality, conflict and social justice were clearly central to the curriculum content of this unit. Moreover, an emphasis on black protest meant that a view of black South Africans as passive victims of an oppressive system was avoided. The unit, however, lacked any clear explanatory framework. Students were presented with interesting stories, information and case studies regarding racial segregation and discrimination, but were not helped to understand very much about why such a system came into being, about the complex historical development of the country or about the relationship between the economy the political, judicial and ideological systems, but perhaps this is expecting too much of a short course at this level.

In this section of the unit, which covered half a term's work, Peter Mills taught lessons on the meanings of the terms persecution and prejudice, and then a series of lessons on South Africa covering the system of apartheid and its implications for black/white social relationships, the analysis of population figures and infant mortality rates, black and white views of apartheid, different forms of protest, and an exercise looking at historical evidence on the Sharpville shootings.

He described the 5th year group that I observed as 'a fairly amenable bunch', who, though 'not very bright', were 'quite keen to get on and work'. The group was fairly small - 22 on the register, though 14/15 was a usual attendance. They presented him with few discipline problems more especially as the few 'potential troublemakers' had begun at this stage of their 5th year to absent themselves. However, the pedagogy which Peter Mills employed was heavily dominated by the examination requirements of continuous assessment. As with the other units on the Integrated Humanities course students were given marks for their completed unit folder, for a number of exercises completed during class time and for a unit project which they worked on in their own time. Peter Mills constantly reminded students of the need to complete folder work 'because the marks go toward your final mark' and often parts of the lesson were taken up with an explanation of the mark scheme for the particular exercise.

The lessons that I observed were class taught, Peter Mills taking responsibility for curriculum, work activities and the pacing of student work.

When most of the students had arrived Peter Mills would deliver a short introduction standing at the front to the students who faced him sitting in rows. Girls generally sat in two rows on one side of the class, boys in two rows on the other, with two rows of empty desks in between. Sometimes he included a brief question and answer session mainly employed to elicit student knowledge or understanding of a particular term or idea rather than opinions, judgements or experiences, often following with brief explanations himself of terms or information. Student participation in these class 'discussions' was limited to short answers to teacher questions and was generally confined to a small group of girls who usually volunteered to answer questions. He would then explain the exercise that he wanted the students to complete, which was listed in worksheet form in the appropriate section of the prepared booklet, dealt with any equipment shortages, and expected the students to work quietly by themselves for the rest of the lesson. During this individual work he wandered the class, supplying paper, answering student questions and generally surveying the group, occasionally glancing over a student's shoulder to inspect their work. The class usually worked quietly, if unenthusiastically, with the minimum of disturbance. Students were expected to take home work to complete if they did not finish during class time. This lesson format was fairly standard and was used for general class work and special sessions devoted to completing assessment work under 'exam' conditions.

The following lesson was fairly typical. The students were asked to work on an extract from a novel called 'The Evidence of Love' by Dan Jacobson about the return to South Africa of a white woman and a 'coloured' man who have married in England.

(Last lesson Tuesday afternoon, 5 boys and 2 girls are present when I arrive 3 minutes after the bell. PM is on the corridor waiting for others to appear. A few minutes later 4 girls arrive, PM decides he is going to start. The students have helped themselves to folders as they come in and sit down quietly, PM gives out the work booklets).

PM - Right could you turn to page 6 please (A girl arrives followed by a boy. His friend from another class tries to accompany him, PM ushers him out)

PM - Sorry about the interruption, Can you turn to page 6, I'll explain what we're going to do after we've read through this together. It's an extract from a novel, It's not true, It hasn't actually happened, but it could have happened, It highlights the problems that face people of different colours in South Africa...(he reads the title of the extract and explains where it is from)...I'll

make a start to prove I can read then I'll ask for volunteers or press gang someone. So 'Coloured Husband, White Wife'...(he reads. About half way through he stops and asks if anyone would like to carry on, Rebecca(R) and Sharon(S), two Afro/Caribbean girls offer, PM choses Sharon and she continues with the passage for a few minutes. Then R has a turn, followed by Elizabeth(E) another Afro/Caribbean girl. PM stops the reading 2 or 3 times to explain the meaning of several words that he thinks they might have difficulty with. They finish the passage.)

PM - Right thanks to our 3 readers. Does anybody have any observations?

(no response)

PM - Well what briefly has happened? What incident is highlighted? what do you think the author is trying to convey?

R - If you are married you are going to be banned.

PM - Right cohabitation between whites and those classed as coloured is banned. Why did the couple decide to go back to South Africa? What was the driving force?

E - They're both South African.

PM - Yes, they're both South African. What did they know before they left England Elizabeth?

R - That it would be a problem.

PM - Yes, they knew that they'd be breaking the law. What is there in the extract which shows they were aware, Susan?

(no response)

PM - Have a look on page 7...(pause)...Anybody found it yet? Have you got it Darren? You won't find it on the wall.

S - Where it says welcome home.

PM - Yes. (he reads a short section) They were very concerned. They were afraid to open their mouths. It took a bit of time before the officials realised that they were going to be breaking the law. why do you think it's got to a situation where the lounge is empty?

GIRL - Because they have been left 'til last.

PM - Why?

E - Because...(inaudible)

PM - Yes. Perhaps they have been expecting a confrontation so they would rather stay at the end of the queue, so that it would be a private thing. Now on page 10 there are 3 standard form questions. The 4th question carries far more marks. (he reads the question) 'Do you think that forcing races to live apart is right? write 100-200 hundred word for or against.' you need to find reasons for whatever stance. I've got a rough idea what the majority of you would stand for, but you've got to try and back up your stance. What could be one answer?

R - No.

PM - Why shouldn't they be forced to live apart? Why should they be allowed to live together?

E - If it's 2 groups then one of them might not like it.

PM - Yes, the stigma of segregation, Right, it's grossly unfair. Are there any other reasons, what's the main one, what is the principle we should all work for? (pause, but no response)...Well irrespective of race or colour or where you come from, all people should be treated equally...Number 4 will take some thinking out, start off with number 1 and work from there. Start from the same page as 'A Vicious Act' (a previous exercise)

(PM then explains about how much they should write on each question and the marks that are allocated. He gives out marked work from the last lesson with odd comments on tidiness, spelling, questions missed out and length of answers. He then tells the students to work on their own for the remaining 20 minutes of the lesson. After a little chatting they settle down to their work. PM stands at his desk and surveys the class or gazes out of the window. On several occasions students put up their hands and PM goes to them to answer their questions. A few minutes before the bell is due to go PM tells them to pack and to take the work home if they haven't finished, explaining that they will start the next section of work on Thursday.)

(Field Notes)

The pedagogy adopted by Peter Mills was, in fact, very similar to that employed by Stephen Barker. Curriculum content, work tasks and pace of work was heavily teacher controlled. Classroom talk was dominated by teacher exposition. Student participation in lessons was limited to answering the teacher's questions which were usually orientated to factual recall or the illustration of points the teacher wished to make. When opportunities arose for students to take a more active role in the interpretation of curriculum materials or to engage in collaborative forms of learning, as for example with the primary source materials on the Sharpville shootings, they were not taken up. The emphasis was on the production of written work for assessment and students' understanding of South African society seemed of secondary importance.

Peter Mills presented a generally critical view of South African society and, although the views of white Afrikaaners were considered at one stage in the unit, he did not examine in any depth ideas which have been put forward in support of apartheid. Whether such views should be presented as legitimate political opinion in the interests of balance is, of course, a controversial issue. My view, outlined in the introductory chapter, is that such views are racist and, although they they should be examined and discussed, they cannot in a society committed to anti-racism be presented as valid or acceptable.

Peter Mills adopted a similar style of teaching with the second year class that I observed. They were, he said, a 'difficult' group and so his approach was cautious. Because of consistent handling and an emphasis on 'plenty of written work at their level', he argued that they had 'settled down' a lot during the year, were now in the habit of working hard and were enjoying what they did in Humanities.

The lessons that I observed were in the middle of a topic on the Caribbean, one of 3 regional studies that made up the 2nd year curriculum. On this topic the class covered work on the position, relief and climate of the Caribbean, and looked at the history of the region, including the cultures of the Arawaks and Caribs, European colonisation, and the slave trade and emancipation. They finished with a look at the economic geography of 'Modern West Indies' focusing on sugar production, bauxite production and tourism, and at some of the reasons for post-war migration from the Caribbean. The approach was very much in the descriptive regional geography and history mold. In the past the teachers in the department had produced their own work books for this unit, but because several of them included copyright material they could no longer be used. As with Stephen Barker Peter Mills selected from a number of text books - 'The People Who Came' Books 1,2 and 3 by Norman (1968), Patterson and Carnegie (1970), Brathwaite and Philips (1972), 'The Slave Trade' by Kamm (1980), and 'The West Indies' by Wright (1979), combining these with remaining non-copyright departmentally produced resources. It was not possible, for reasons of time, to do a detailed content analysis of the curriculum taught in this unit. In the lessons I observed Peter Mills focused on the economy of Jamaica. the emphasis was mainly on the agricultural techniques used in sugar production and how these were influenced by environmental factors such as climate and relief.

I do not intend reproducing a transcript or field notes from any of these lessons as their format and the pedagogy employed was so similar to the other lessons I have described. Whole class teaching based around teacher selected curricula on the sub-topics listed above, followed by individual student seat work was the norm, which differed little from the pedagogy adopted by Stephen Barker, and, as far as I could gather by Alan Moore.

Conclusion

To summarise, the Humanities teachers were ambivalent in their attitudes to teaching at Milltown High. They lacked the wider political commitments which had drawn the English teachers to the school. But they adopted a calm and consistent approach to their work based upon long years of classroom experience, and succeeded in establishing an ordered working environment which did not characterise some areas of the school, and which some of the students I interviewed appreciated. They thought many of the students were 'difficult' and 'disturbed', but maintained a similar commitment to individualism in their typifications and an avoidance of premature categorisation as did the English teachers.

The Humanities curriculum was to a large extent inherited from the staff who taught in the school before secondary reorganisation. Although the teachers had changed some curriculum content, the third year course for example was a new development, there had been little change in the overall structure and content. There were several constraining forces here. First, the difficulties in obtaining appropriate resources. This position was made doubly difficult because of the L.E.A.'s clamp down on the reproduction of copyright material, which meant that it was difficult for the teachers to draw on a variety of sources. Second, there was the upset of the school reorganisation itself. A great deal of teacher time and energy went into coping with the reorganisation and its effects. There was consequently less time for curriculum development. Third, there were several other external curriculum developments in the offing which encouraged caution. Stephen Barker explained that he saw little point in radically changing the 4th and 5th year curriculum before looking closely at the new GCSE course which was being developed for 1986. He also saw little point in revising the second year curriculum in view of the expansion of the Integrated Curriculum. Thus, the years prior to my field work had not been particularly conducive to departmental curriculum development.

The main aims of the Humanities teachers were to teach basic skills and concepts derived from the disciplines of Geography, History and Religious Studies, and to increase student knowledge of the variety of human cultures both past and present in Britain and throughout the world. They also aimed to provide a 'balanced' examination of important social issues and developments by presenting a range of different explanations and viewpoints. As with the

English teachers it is difficult to judge whether they succeeded here, partly because of the problems of defining and assessing 'balance', but also because I was unable to observe the full range of the department's teaching and curriculum. In the units I did observe, whilst on occasions I felt a rather rosy picture of contemporary social organisation and relationships was presented in some lessons, in others a more critical view was transmitted. The unit of work on Persecution and Prejudice was certainly unbalanced in the sense of being specifically anti-apartheid and anti-Nazi, but I would regard this form of imbalance as being perfectly acceptable and necessary in a society committed to the values non-racism and democracy.

Multiculturalism appeared to be a central organising principle in the selection of curriculum content. The idea was to reflect the history and background of the students in the curriculum - so the 2nd year curriculum was organised around the 3 regional studies - The Caribbean, Africa and India. Thus the countries or regions of origin of the main ethnic minority groups in the school formed the basis of the second year curriculum. The idea was also to give the students illustrations of different social, economic and cultural forms around the world and use these to illustrate key concepts - so the 'Milltown Oxfam Project' involving a case study of life in Guatemala was utilised in the 2nd year, a variety of case studies of life in the Third World were used on the topic of 'Development' and the Religious Education input to the topic of 'Personal Development' looked at the approach of different world religions to various rites of passage. The Humanities teachers had also removed from the curriculum materials which they felt were racist. The teachers hoped to encourage a greater awareness and tolerance of different cultural forms through their selection of curriculum content. In this way they claimed to be Anti-Racist.

Whilst they did teach the unit on 'Persecution and Prejudice' considerations of racial inequality and racism in Britain were absent from this unit and from the rest of the department's work. In terms of the model of Anti-Racist Education discussed in my introductory chapter this was a significant omission from the school's Humanities curriculum. It can be explained partly by the constraints on curriculum development which the members of the department felt, but also by an absence of strong commitment on the part of the Humanities teachers to the model of Anti-Racism that I have outlined.

The teachers rejected the 'progressive' pedagogy advocated by David Benyon because they felt such approaches were unsuitable for the realities of classroom life at Milltown High. Here their most pressing need was the maintenance of classroom order which could frequently be threatened. They developed teaching styles orientated primarily to this aim. Their approaches were dominated by whole class teaching in which the teacher strongly 'framed' the knowledge transmission in the classroom. In every lesson the teacher alone was responsible for the selection and presentation of subject content, and exerted strong control over the pacing of students' work. There was little differentiation of tasks according to the ability level or interest of students. Lessons were generally 'aimed at the middle' and basic work tasks, written on the blackboard or on work sheets, were intended to be completed by all students. The only modification that had been made to practice as a result of the introduction of mixed ability grouping had been to begin each set of work tasks with a simple exercise that all students could perform and to provide extension tasks for those who 'finished first'. Teaching was usually didactic in form with an emphasis on teacher exposition interspersed with short question and answer sessions heavily dominated by the teacher. This was followed by individual seat work in which student/student interaction was discouraged and the teacher 'policed' (A. Hargreaves 1979) the classroom. Group work and small group discussion, which might have permitted a greater degree of student participation, and co-operation, or project work which could have increased student control over the pacing of work was rarely used.

Footnotes

- 1) In September 1986 this system was replaced by the new G.C.S.E. Integrated Humanities course for the 4th year students.
- 2) This was unlike David Benyon who talked about the courses in terms of curriculum flexibility, relevance and a 'progressive' pedagogy.
- 3) This conclusion is largely derived from interview data as the Humanities teachers in fact spent little time together outside the classroom. Stephen Barker spent much of his non-teaching time and lunchtimes in his teaching room, Peter Mills frequently spent his with the other Heads of Year/School, and Alan Moore spent much of his time in the Home Economics Department. It was therefore difficult to mix 'informally' with them as I did with the English teachers.
- 4) Although this course was abandoned in 1986/87 and all students took the same basic course.
- 5) See Hammersley (1974) for a detailed description of this style.
- 6) Stephen Barker himself called these actions 'pre-emptive strikes'.
- 7) In a discussion following my lesson observation Stephen Barker explained that he had always been very much aware of my presence as an observer in the classroom and had therefore been more concerned than he normally would be with social order in the classroom. This reactivity is a product of the overwhelming importance of maintaining classroom control in teachers' occupational culture (see Denscombe 1985), which of course has implications for teachers' feelings of competence and self-worth. It is important to emphasize that this form of reactivity influences many descriptions of classroom life.
- 8) Stephen Barker had few of the problems in this respect that the English teachers faced.

Chapter Eight

Racism, Social Differentiation and Equal Opportunities at Milltown High School.

Introduction

As I explained in my introductory chapter research which has examined in-school processes has often found that working class, female and ethnic minority students are disadvantaged. In the case of ethnic minorities it has been shown that some teachers have negative views of ethnic minority students, especially of Afro/Caribbean students, and that these views can affect their behaviour towards them in the school and the classroom. Moreover, sometimes these students are more likely to be allocated to low status positions in school and classroom social structures and accorded less favourable treatment and opportunities as a result.

My concern was whether I would find such processes in operation at Milltown High or whether as a result of having a school policy on racism, and the awareness encouraged by the school's engagement with the issue of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education, such processes would have been eliminated or combatted. In other words I was interested in whether the staff at Milltown High had in fact succeeded in creating the sort of non-racist environment that their policy advocated.

In order to address this question I will present data from a number of sources. First, there are my own informal observations during the year of my field work. Second, there is data from interviews that I conducted with 32 of the teaching staff. Third, there is information from interviews and small group discussions that I conducted with a sample of 5th year students. Fourth, there is an analysis I conducted of the school's procedures for formal differentiation, its division of students into ability groups and its option system. And finally, there is data from a case study of differentiation within one mixed ability class by five of their teachers.

Racism in the School - An Ethnographer's Overview

One of the strengths of the ethnographic method is the observation of social action as it occurs in 'natural' settings. The ethnographer is able to study what people actually do in 'real' life rather than what they do in a laboratory or what they say they do in answer to survey questions. Such observation is generally conducted over a relatively long period of time and the researcher becomes a participant in some way in the setting in order to minimise what has been termed 'reactivity' i.e. the effect that the researcher has on whatever he/she is studying. Thus at Milltown High I was able to study attitudes and behaviour in 'naturalistic' settings such as in the school staffroom, classrooms and corridors. I was also able to observe and participate in informal conversations, meetings, and discussions with students. Several of the teachers and some of the students became key informants supplying me with information about the attitudes and behaviour of others in the school. Furthermore, because of the length of time I spent 'in the field' I became an accepted figure in most areas of the school and the influence of my presence over social interaction was minimised. This does not mean, of course, that my observation of social behaviour and attitudes at Milltown High was totally accurate. Although I did attempt to sample systematically (in terms of time, people and events) it is clearly possible that views were expressed and behaviour occurred which was different from that which I observed. It also does not mean that reactivity was totally eliminated. This is, of course, never the case (see Hammersley and Atkinson 1983). In terms of racial attitudes it is possible that because of my presence actors did not express the views they would otherwise have done. We can only say that the ethnographic method made this less likely to happen than would be the case with other methods.

During the course of my field work I encountered very few naturally expressed attitudes from teachers which could be said to be racist (see introductory chapter for definition). Unlike the staffroom described by Hammersley (1980) staffroom talk at Milltown High (and also naturally occurring teacher talk in other situations) was not characterised by derogatory remarks about 'immigrants' or about the threat to 'standards' and discipline posed by 'immigration', nor were there references to ethnic minority cultures as 'alien' or 'inferior'. Whilst there was much talk in the staffroom about individual students in which information and perceptions were 'traded' (Hammersley 1980)

few references were made to students' ethnic or racial group. Students who posed problems in terms of behaviour were featured more frequently in staffroom talk, but there seemed to be roughly proportionate numbers of black and white students who came into this category. Moreover, although sometimes clearly staffroom talk did result in some premature categorisation of certain students, there were several staff who would challenge the conceptions of others especially where they sensed unfair or inappropriate labelling.

The only times that I came across racist attitudes was from a small number of 'supply' staff. During the teachers' pay dispute the school was desperate for supply teachers to cover for staff absence. They were difficult to obtain and often the school had to take whoever was available or send students home. It was not possible for the head to interview such staff and therefore explore their attitudes before they came to the school. A few of these teachers were clearly working 'just for the money' and had negative and preconceived views about ethnic minority students. One retired ex-teacher whom I spoke to informally in the staffroom explained how she found 'these black children aggressive and threatening' and how she 'avoided confrontation with them at all costs'. Another, when I asked him how teaching at Milltown High compared with other schools he had worked in said:

The big difference is the black kids. They're just bone idle and lazy. I mean I'd get twice as much done in the last school I worked in. I think it's all the money the politicians throw at them. There's no incentive, they can just live on the dole if they want to.

A third, in a discussion I overheard with another teacher in the staffroom, explained how he agreed with the views of Raymond Honeyford. It was self evident he thought that 'if white kids were in a minority in a mainly black school then they will inevitably suffer'. Another retired teacher came up to me in a lesson I observed with a class that I was following around for a day and said, 'you get plenty of jungle talk here, but not much in the way of work'. However, it is important to emphasise that the majority of supply teachers were not of this ilk, and certainly these comments were not characteristic of the talk of permanent staff at Milltown High.

In terms of behaviour in classrooms and around the school I did not observe any situations which I felt were patterned by racist attitudes from

staff. There were no incidents of the type described by Wright (1986) in which a teacher's insensitive attitude towards his ethnic minority students created a situation of conflict. I did see many conflicts between staff and students, but they seemed to be largely unrelated to issues of race and uninfluenced by racist attitudes. The one exception to this was an incident with a supply teacher which was reported to me by another teacher. A black student had become embroiled in a confrontation with her and she had in a fit of temper called him a 'nigger'. The staff I spoke to about this were horrified and the boy's complaint was speedily and sympathetically dealt with. The teacher did not return to work in the school.

I did not observe any racist behaviour by staff in their interactions with ethnic minority students. Classroom rules and codes of conduct were on the whole flexibly and fairly administered and in the lessons I observed interaction patterns did not appear to be related to students' ethnic or racial backgrounds. However, the more covert biases in classroom interaction are often difficult to detect, and although I was always on the lookout for evidence of such biases, when conducting my preliminary observations and my case studies of the English and Humanities departments I did not systematically set out to collect data on this. I did, however, when conducting the class case study which is reported later in this chapter. On isolated occasions, according to my informants, it did seem that racially differentiated patterns of interaction occurred in classes. But, I was assured by the teacher who described an example from her own experience, that this was not a result of her racist attitudes.

The teacher concerned was Susan Parker, whose views and practice I have described more fully in the chapter on the English department. She described one class that she took over from Jennifer Green who was on maternity leave. The students were apparently very angry that their 'proper' teacher had left them in the middle of an examination course. They had not been taught by Susan Parker before and it seems that the Afro/Caribbean students in the group were particularly annoyed, as they had developed a close and loyal relationship with Jennifer Green. They responded by behaving badly and being extremely hostile to their new teacher. Susan Parker explained (1) that she found herself interacting more often and more positively with the white students in the class. The situation was made worse by the fact that she decided, partly on Jennifer Green's advice, to study Ian MacDonald's novel 'The Hummingbird Tree'

which contains in it racist dialogue. When Susan Parker read the text to the class, hoping to explore the Anti-Racist message of the book, she was accused of racism herself by the Afro/Caribbean students. After a long session of discussion involving one of the deputy heads the situation was eventually resolved. Perhaps this incident serves to underline that it is important to take student attitudes and action into account in explaining classroom interaction. And again it is important to emphasise that this situation was very much the exception. I myself did not observe any examples of such clear differential treatment.

Similarly the types of inadvertent differential treatment that Driver (1979) observed were not apparent at Milltown High. Whilst many of the students perplexed, confused and posed management problems for the teachers this did not seem to relate strongly to their ethnic backgrounds or characteristics. Afro/Caribbean students did not seem to be overrepresented in the disciplinary incidents that I observed. Teachers did not take longer to get to know Afro/Caribbean students nor were they more likely to confuse their identities. In fact it appeared to be unstated policy at Milltown High for teachers, where possible, to continue teaching the same class of students in consecutive years. As a result many of the teachers 'knew' their students very well (2). Teachers did not, so far as I was aware, confuse the non-verbal communications of their Afro/Caribbean students nor did they fail to interpret derogatory expressions used by them. In fact cultural signals of this type were far more ethnically uniform at Milltown High than appears to have been the case in Driver's study school. White students, for example, would sometimes suck their lips in the same way as black students to signal dissent. In an established multi-racial area like Chesham and Richmond Hill there was considerable mixing of peer group cultures and ethnically exclusive behavioural forms were less common (3).

It is important to realise that Driver's research was conducted in the early 1970's. Some of the students he studied may have been fairly recent arrivals from the Caribbean and certainly the teachers cannot have had much experience in dealing with students from diverse cultural backgrounds. The situation in his school must have been ripe for the sorts of cultural confusions he described. At Milltown High this was not so much the case. Not only was there less ethnically exclusive behaviour, but also teachers had had far more experience in recognising and dealing with such behaviour that

occurred. This applied to the use of 'patois' which Driver noticed was used by black students to insult teachers or deny them access to communication. Although a form of 'patois' was used sometimes by black students in this way, it was very much a Milltown youth version and as such was sometimes used by white students, especially those with strong black friendships. The use of 'strong' patois, unintelligible to teachers, was relatively rare. Furthermore, I did not see any negative or derogatory treatment of students by teachers in response to the use of dialect or patois. Thus the sorts of confusions which Driver argued provided 'obstacles to confident relations between West Indian pupils and English teachers (sic)' were not apparent at Milltown High. Afro/Caribbean students did not appear to be treated differently from their white peers as a result of cultural confusions.

On the surface, then, it did seem that the teachers at Milltown High had created an environment which was free of the expression of racism by staff (I will describe inter-ethnic student attitudes and behaviour below) and where students were treated equitably. It is possible though that racist attitudes whilst proscribed in public staffroom talk could still be important in teachers' private views and attitudes towards students from different ethnic groups. I address this question in the next section.

Teacher Attitudes

In order to examine more closely teachers' racial attitudes in the interviews that I conducted with 32 of the staff I asked two open-ended questions. First, I asked what teachers felt were the main characteristics of and differences between students of different ethnic groups. Secondly, I asked whether the teachers had to adjust their approach in the classroom to suit students of different ethnic backgrounds. These questions were similar to the ones asked by Carrington and Wood (1983) in the secondary school they studied and resulted in several staff there revealing derogatory stereotypes of ethnic minority students. I have already described the responses of the teachers in the English and Humanities departments to these questions. These teachers were reluctant to categorise and generalise about students in terms of their race or ethnicity. They explained that they saw students as individuals and whilst it was important to understand students' ethnic backgrounds this was relatively unimportant in their day-to-day interactions with them. When they did generalise it was in terms of the positive attributes deriving from ethnicity. They said that they adjusted their approaches in the classroom to, as far as possible, cater for the needs of individual students, but this was not dependent upon ethnic group. To what extent were these attitudes characteristic of staff as a whole at Milltown High?

A large proportion of the teachers that I interviewed (24 out of the 32) either refused to generalise or explained that they thought there were no or only very small differences between students of different ethnic groups. A number were well aware of the dangers of stereotyping and were therefore reluctant to attribute characteristics to students on the basis of their ethnic origins. 'I don't think about students in those terms' or 'I think it's very dangerous to start thinking about kids in that way', were very common replies to my question. Two teachers, perceptively, challenged the ethical basis of my question, arguing that by asking it I was perhaps encouraging teachers to articulate stereotypes that might not have featured centrally in their thoughts and that I might thereby legitimate such views. The majority of these teachers argued that there were as many differences between students of the same ethnic group as there were between ethnic groups, and that really it was 'individuals' who were different. 'It all comes down to personality,' said one teacher. The following comments from a Maths teacher were typical:

No I don't think there are many differences. Maybe I should have noticed more, maybe I don't look very carefully, but no I don't really think there are many. They all seem like individuals to me. It's difficult to make generalisations about different groups. I mean some of the Asian kids seem a bit more prepared to work and easier to settle down, but there are difficult ones amongst them. When you compare West Indian kids with white, well you can't really see much difference now-a-days. You can't say West Indian kids are more volatile, because many of the white kids are as well.

Several made the point that I raised in the last section, that in a multi-ethnic area like Chesham or Richmond Hill there was considerable mixing of cultural forms, and that nearly all the students at Milltown High had been born and brought up in the area, and so ethnic differences were far less pronounced than they were 15 years ago. These teachers all maintained, in answer to my second question, that they did not adjust their approach to suit students of different ethnic groups. They adjusted their approach to suit 'individuals' or what they knew of the individuals in their classes.

Differential treatment, they argued, was not related to ethnic group. Students were typed on the basis of their classroom performance and general behaviour around the school, and if differential treatment was necessary it was on this basis. Ethnicity was not a factor in their judgements.

The majority of teachers who did offer to generalise (8 out of the 32) did so very tentatively, often prefacing their comments with statements like - 'You do realise I'm generalising like mad' or 'I'm not saying they're all like this it's only a tendency' or 'I think it's a bit dangerous talking about kids like this'. Their comments in reference to ethnic minority students displayed a mixture of positive and negative attitudes. Afro/Caribbean students were generally held to be more 'volatile', 'excitable', in their behaviour and, especially the boys, 'laid back' in their attitude to school work, but they were also seen as 'lively' (in a positive sense of playing an active part in lessons), 'better attenders', and by one as 'better dressed'. Two of these teachers made distinctions between Afro/Caribbean girls and boys. The former were held to be 'grafters' and 'dependable', the latter as having a more 'easy come, easy go attitude'. The few Asian students in the school were regarded as 'more willing to work' and 'better behaved', but also as 'tending to be rather arrogant'. The following comments by a Business Studies teacher were typical:

Well, of course, you've got to be aware that in asking a question like that you're asking for generalisations and stereotypes. And there's a risk to generalising, there's always a danger. I mean individuals may not be at all like the generalisation, individuals within the group may be very different. But at the risk of generalising West Indians, or people of West Indian descent...seem more naturally ebullient, lively, noisy, more given to laughter. They are more up and down or...volatile. There are of course many exceptions. The Asian guys tend to be more introverted and subdued, less outward going. They operate more on an even keel, they're less volatile and more hard-working. Again of course there are many exceptions. Then you've got the Caucasians, the whites. They're not as lively. There's not the same obvious interest in drama, music, art as the West Indians. They're more subdued. They're not as hard working as the Asians....The keenest attenders seem to be the West Indians. That's an impression I get from my tutor group....Discipline wise the Asians seem more easily intimidated if they've done something wrong which I suppose makes them more amenable. There's not much to choose between West Indian and white in terms of behaviour.

These teachers certainly did not have negative attitudes towards their ethnic minority students, and as I have said they were extremely cautious and reluctant to generalise about them. Indeed the typifications that they did produce could, perhaps, be regarded as more a product of the interview questions than an indication of their active attitudes. In answer to my second question they all maintained that they did not vary their approach in the classroom according to the ethnicity of the students, but adopted common standards and expectations for all students.

Only two teachers out of the 32 interviewed appeared to attribute negative characteristics to students on the basis of their ethnic group. One, a Craft teacher, had this to say:

Well to me they (Afro/Caribbean people) tend to be an underachieving nation, on the whole. They don't make much effort. If they can get an excuse for finding a way out of a situation, they'll jump on the bandwagon - 'Oh your picking on me because I'm coloured' and this and that...but a lot of the West Indians in this school the amount of effort they put into their work is not very good... I think basically it is just their culture. I

mean the Pakistani race are an arrogant race, but they work hard and they work as a unit. Even in business they're ruthless. Same with the Indian community to some degree. They tend to work hard at it, whatever they do and get results for it. Whereas the West Indians their family set up is very fragile. You know the fathers think nothing of...We had a lad last year he had one father and four mothers. You know that sort of instability...I mean there was one who was one of fourteen and not one was related. I know that's just an extreme case, but I don't think that's untypical of the West Indian. Their actual family upbringing is very, very insecure, and I think that reflects on the children as well.

This particular teacher also regarded many of the white children who now came to the school in a fairly negative light also. They too were held to be 'lazy' and 'un-disciplined', but Afro/Caribbean students were more so, he suggested.

The other, a science teacher argued that:

Afro/Caribbean boys tend to be more aggressive than white boys in this school. That's largely to do, so far as I can see, with their nutrition at an early age.

He also commented that:

I'm very aware that certain Afro/Caribbean attitudes to society and life in general are much more laid-back than typical English attitudes...Afro/Caribbeans have got a different attitude to life, to their behaviour, I mean generally they are less likely to want to sit still and write, they're more likely to be up and doing things. They don't take discipline so easily, they're not disciplined in that sort of sense. That's not making any inferior statement about them, it's a recognition of their racial differences.

However, even these teachers maintained that in the classroom they did not adjust their approach to suit students of different ethnic groups. They both said that they treated all the students equally, and made judgements and based their actions on the same standards for all.

On the basis of these interviews, then, it appears that the vast majority of staff at Milltown High did not subscribe to racist views of ethnic minority students and were well aware of the dangers of attributing characteristics to students on the basis of their ethnic group. They did not appear to operate on the basis of what Figueroa (1984) calls 'a racial frame of reference'. To what extent this awareness was a product of the school having adopted a policy statement and engaged with the issue of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education is difficult to say, but a number of the teachers explained that their awareness of such issues had been heightened by informal discussion of school policy in this area.

Interestingly two teachers described how their attitudes had changed since arriving at Milltown High. They had both previously taught in mainly white schools in other parts of the city. When their colleagues there heard that they were going to work at Milltown High they were told by several to 'watch out for the black kids'. The impression they got from 'the grapevine' was that Afro/Caribbean students were 'difficult', 'excitable' and even 'explosive', and that they had to be 'handled with kid gloves'. They therefore arrived with certain preconceptions regarding the nature of Afro/Caribbean students. One of the teachers explained how he deliberately treated Afro/Caribbean students less strictly than their white peers as a result during his first few months in the school. However, after discussing this issue with other staff at Milltown High and experiencing the school, he had come to the conclusion that his view was erroneous. He now treated all the students equally irrespective of their ethnic group. It seems that informal gossip within the teaching profession can sometimes lead to the transference of racist myths from one institution to another. This, perhaps combined with impressions gathered from the media, can influence teacher attitudes which may influence their initial actions when they arrive in a multi-ethnic school, or indeed their decision to work in such a school at all. But the fact that staff at Milltown High had engaged with the issue of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education and discussed it informally helped to dispel these myths once the teachers arrived in the school.

Students' Views

So far the evidence that I have presented seems to indicate that the staff at Milltown High had succeeded in creating a non-racist ethos. I was interested in whether the views of students would confirm this. In the 1985/86 academic year I spent 6 lessons with the 4th year students in Social education, a subject that they had once each week, and I took out small groups to discuss their opinions of the school, their education and relationships with the teachers. We also talked about their hopes and aspirations for the future and how this affected attitudes to school, and their perceptions of ethnic relations within the school. Discussions were relatively informal and although structured by the topics I put forward, were fairly wide ranging. I did not attempt to systematically sample students, but I talked to 22 students in all, from different ethnic groups. The groups were mainly small friendship groups, some were ethnically uniform i.e. all Afro/Caribbean or all white, some were mixed, all were single sex.

In the Autumn term of 1986 I attempted to look at student views a little more systematically. I asked the tutors of fifth year students to divide them into three groups on the basis of their perception of the student's orientation to school - students who were positively orientated to school, students who were negatively orientated and those who were ambivalent in their attitudes to school. Interestingly boys from both the main ethnic groups were slightly more likely than girls to be seen as anti-school, and Afro/Caribbean boys were slightly more likely than Afro/Caribbean girls and white boys to be seen as anti-school. According to the teachers then, the most anti-school group were Afro/Caribbean boys. Afro/Caribbean girls and the four Asian Boys in the year (there were no Asian girls in the 5th year) were seen as the most pro-school. I then constructed a rather crude stratified sample of students for interview utilising the categories male/female, Afro-Caribbean/White, pro-school/ambivalent to school/anti-school, to attempt to ensure that the students I interviewed were 'representative', at least on these criteria, of the whole 5th year. However, because of the erratic attendance of certain students, and the reluctance of others to take part, I found it difficult to interview my original sample. But I did interview some students in all the main categories. 31 students from the 103 in the 5th year were interviewed in all. Some were interviewed individually. Others asked if they could bring a friend. I accepted

this and therefore interviewed some students in pairs. Again interviews were informal and relatively unstructured and concentrated on the topics covered in the group discussions mentioned above. Most of the interviews were tape recorded with the students' permission.

By this time I had got to know many of the students quite well, by mixing with them informally in tutor group time and around the school and attached youth centre at lunch times. Most had come to know me as 'the person who was writing a book about the school' and did not see me as a teacher, although I was, of course, someone whom they knew spent a lot of time with the teachers. I reassured all of them about the confidentiality of what they said to me, and this most seemed to accept. Those that agreed to be interviewed all seemed willing to talk openly and frankly. On the whole they seemed to welcome the opportunity to talk and express their opinions and to help in my project. It is, of course, impossible to tell how much the data from these interviews was affected by the students' perceptions of me as male, white and 'teacher-like'. Within obvious constraints I did my utmost to minimise such reactivity.

I have not got the space here to report the detail of these interviews. What I mainly want to focus upon is students' perceptions of racism within the school, the extent to which they felt that relationships with teachers and other students were patterned by racism or not, and whether they felt that there was differential treatment of students on the basis of ethnic group within the school. I began all the interviews with general questions asking students what they felt about the school and the education they received, and what they thought were the good and bad things about the school. I then went on to ask them about their attitudes to and relationships with the teachers, and what they felt were the good and bad things about the teachers. By not raising specific issues at the beginning of the interview I hoped to get at what the students felt were important. If, for example, racism was seen as a significant issue then I thought the students would raise it in response to these early general questions. Later in the interview I asked more specific questions about their perceptions of racism in the school amongst the teachers and students, and the extent to which they felt relationships were influenced by race.

Responses to my questions varied considerable according to the student's general orientation to school. Unsurprisingly, those who had been categorised

by their teachers as pro-school were more likely to respond positively and favourably to school life and to their teachers. Such students from both main ethnic groups explained that they were happy on the whole with the school and their education. Some said that they felt that the school had got an unjustified bad reputation in the local area, largely as a result of the activities of a small minority of 'unruly' younger pupils. Two Afro/Caribbean girls, for example, felt very aggrieved that the whole school and standards within the school were being 'let down' by this small group. They said that they thought the worst things about the school were the vandalism, the grafitti and the fact that 'some kids use abusive language to the teachers', and argued that it was mainly the parents of such students who were to blame because they 'are supposed to teach you manners, and half of them don't bother'. The trouble and disruption caused by such students and the inability of some teachers to deal with it effectively was one of the biggest problems identified by these pro-school students.

Although generally satisfied with the school, they did not accept uncritically everything that went on. In fact some of these students, again from both major ethnic groups, were vocal and articulate in expressing criticisms of the school. One Afro/Caribbean boy, for example, explained how he felt David Benyon, the headteacher, had failed to provide an adequate leadership for the school and how the school had suffered from the abandonment of its house system. Others expressed concern about the lack of adequate facilities, the lack of extra-curricular activities, and the poor quality of many supply teachers. These, combined with the 'lack of pressure from some teachers' (Afro/Caribbean girl), 'falling behind because of always being sent home' (White girl), 'not understanding the work because the teacher doesn't explain in well enough' (White boy), were the main complaints from these students.

Most of them had a fairly sophisticated typology of teachers which expressed their clear expectations of how they thought teachers ought to teach and act. Students of both main ethnic groups had very similar views which resembled closely the opinions of school students interviewed by other researchers (see Nash 1976, Furlong 1976 and 1977, Beynon 1985). Teachers were expected to be 'strict' and not 'soft', keep order in the classroom, deal with them fairly and consistently without undue aggression, and be reasonably friendly, showing they had the ability to 'have a laugh' (c.f. Woods 1979) and

share a joke. They were also expected to set work and teach in a way which was interesting, and to give explanations which were clear and easily intelligible. On these criteria teachers were judged or 'typed' and it was largely around these criteria that the students I interviewed focused their comments. Their biggest criticism was of teachers who were 'soft' and failed to control their classes, or who provided 'boring' work with inadequate explanation. But these pro-school students felt that the majority of their teachers were competent and fair and that the work they set was interesting. Several specifically commented favourably on the openness and friendliness of many of the teachers. Racism from teachers was not something that any of them raised themselves as an issue. It did not appear to be something which they thought was common amongst their teachers or of great significance in the school.

When questioned more specifically about racism in the school pro-school students of both main ethnic groups argued that it was relatively limited. None of the students said that they had come across racism from any of the teachers at present at Milltown High. One Afro/Caribbean boy explained that he thought teachers who were racist would not come to work at Milltown High anyway. There was one exception, however. One ex-teacher's name was quoted with monotonous regularity in response to my questions. He was a Craft teacher who had since left the school and every student appeared to have a story to tell about him. An Afro/Caribbean girl described him:

That Mr.Stone he was racist...He did little things like always put you by yourself and other people from a different part of the class would talk and he would directly pick on you. He would take you out of the class and start givin' you lip. And he mainly seemed to pick on black children. I stayed out of his way...Most of the kids didn't like him because of the way he acted towards them. He was really out of order. For example, if he accused you of something you did not do and you argued back he would shout in your face and point at you and push you around. He was randy as well. He used to come up to you and put his arm around you. He shouldn't do that.

This teacher was accused of racism by nearly all the students (pro-school and anti-school) I interviewed. In a sense his reputation had entered into student

mythology and may have been exaggerated as a result. But from the students' accounts he does appear to have been particularly inept in his dealings with many students, especially Afro/Caribbean. He apparently had a short and explosive temper and regularly got into confrontations with students. Several of these resulted in physical violence from students to him and vice versa. On occasions racist insults were exchanged. He on many occasions over-stepped the limits of what students (and most staff) regarded as fair and acceptable teacher behaviour and appears to have been disliked by many students as a result (c.f. Werthman 1963, Woods 1979, Beynon 1985). Many students used the accusation of 'racism' as a means of expressing their dislike. However, several of the pro-school students I interviewed used the case of Mr.Stone as a means of highlighting what they saw as the non-racism of the present staff at Milltown High. 'None of the other teachers are like him', one said. Another explained how he thought the teachers had got rid of Mr.Stone because he was racist. Mr.Stone was very much atypical of teachers at Milltown High, they maintained. On the whole these students did not feel that racism was very significant in their relationships with teachers. Similarly none of them quoted any instances where ethnic minority student had been unfairly treated or examples of practices within the school that they felt discriminated against them. They felt that generally students from different ethnic groups were treated equally and fairly.

There were only four students of Asian origin in the 5th year all of whom were perceived by their teachers as pro-school. I interviewed two of these students together. Their views were very similar to those of the students I have just described, but they were even more critical of the inability of their teachers to handle the students who 'mess about' and 'waste everybody's time'. In their opinion teachers were far too 'soft' and 'tolerant' and they thought such students ought to be 'expelled'. Apart from this they explained that they got on very well with their teachers and did not feel that any of them were racist.

Those students who were described by their teachers as anti-school or ambivalent to school not surprisingly were less positive about their experiences in school and about their teachers. Although slightly more Afro/Caribbean boys came into these categories than might have been expected on the basis of their proportion in the school, their views were shared by a large number of girls and boys from both main ethnic groups. These students

were more likely to describe the school as 'rubbish', 'a waste of time' or a 'right dump'. They often thought that the 'standards' of work and behaviour in the school had 'gone right down' and mainly attributed blame to the teachers who 'don't really care' or 'can't handle us'. Many of these students could find very little that was good to say about the school, and often produced a string of complaints, an indication of the extent of their alienation. Some believed that it was pretty pointless to come to school anyway as they were not going to get any qualifications and even if they did there were few jobs for them to go on to. Many, however, and this especially applied to Afro/Caribbean students maintained a strong belief in the value of academic qualifications and although rejecting much of what was on offer at school said they were planning to go to college to 'get qualifications'. They displayed a similar 'contradictory' attitude to their education to that noted by Furlong (1984) in his study of a group of disaffected Afro/Caribbean students. On the one hand they valued 'education' and the potential upward mobility that it offered, on the other they were strongly attached to a peer group culture which rejected many school norms.

Their complaints were sometimes similar to those voiced by pro-school students, but they were wider ranging. School facilities were thought to be poor. Much school work was considered 'boring' or 'a waste of time'. Many of the school rules were considered petty and childish. 'They just treat you like kids. You can't do this and you can't do that. You've only got to be a couple of minutes late for your lesson or lean back on your chair and they send you to 201 (the school's withdrawal unit)', said one Afro/Caribbean boy. Some complained that rules were inconsistently applied and that they were 'picked on', sent out of class, sent home or suspended for things that other students would get away with. But interestingly very few of these inconsistencies were seen to relate to race. The lack of school trips and extra-curricular sport and activities, and the continual sending home because of absent teachers, both of which were mainly the result of the teachers' industrial action, were also very common complaints.

These students operated with similar conceptions of teachers to the ones I discussed above. If anything they were more discerning and more prepared to be critical if teachers did not live up to their expectations. They criticised many teachers for being 'soft', 'unable to control us', 'not making us work', for setting low standards of work and behaviour, for giving dull or

incomprehensible work or activities they regarded as pointless, or for being 'moody' or unfriendly. Teachers who were seen as weak or incompetent were regarded as fair game and often mercilessly treated in terms of disruptive behaviour. At the same time teachers who tried to impose their authority too forcefully were often seen as 'pushing their luck' or 'gettin' above themselves'. They had to tread a very narrow line to win the respect and compliance of many of these students.

However only three of those that I interviewed complained, without being asked, about what they felt was racism from their teachers. When I asked one Afro/Caribbean boy who had been in a lot of trouble and had been suspended several times, what he thought were the bad things about the school he said:

The teachers...they treat you really bad. I'm sure there are some racist teachers in this school. Like last time I got suspended Mr.Benyon asked Paul Jones (a white boy in similar trouble) to sit down while he told me to stand up. There were a load of chairs there, but he made sure I had to stand up.

However, when we discussed this instance further he explained:

I don't really think it was prejudice against colour, just prejudice against me. He doesn't like me at all.

When we discussed more generally the issue of teacher racism he argued that there was 'racism between some of the teachers and the pupils', and he quoted the infamous Mr.Stone as an example:

He got Peter Miller in his woodwork room and he locked his door and he had a stick and he was trying to hit him. And Peter picked up another one and fought his way out and Mr.Stone didn't report it. That's just racialism...

But he explained that he did not think it was always possible to tell if a teacher was actually racist or not. As far as he was concerned he felt that he had been labelled and 'picked on' by the teachers, but he was unsure whether this was related to race or whether 'it's just me'.

Two other anti-school Afro/Caribbean boys interviewed together also raised the issue of racism:

DAVID - A few of the teachers are prejudiced. For example Mr.Stone he always used to act aggressive to black kids when they used to do something wrong. I got told that he called a black girl a black slag...

PF - Are there any other teachers you would say are prejudiced?

DAVID - Na

EDWIN - Mrs. Woods

DAVID - Yeah, I don't like her attitude...She's aggressive all the time...It's the way she carries on. I mean you can tell someone, they don't need to show you what they're like you can just read them as they go along, as they do certain things, you can just read them.

When pressed further these boys found it difficult to specify exactly what they meant and to give examples of incidents which they felt showed 'prejudice'. They appeared to use the accusation in a generalised way in order to signify their profound alienation from the school and the teachers. 'Racism' here was used as a slogan to criticise the school.

But these students were unusual even amongst the anti-school students in complaining of racism. Most students did not raise it as an issue. When I introduced the topic the majority agreed that, with the exception of Mr.Stone, they did not feel their teachers at Milltown High were racist, or that any of the systems that operated put ethnic minority students at a disadvantage. The following discussion with a group of Afro/Caribbean student was typical of many of the conversations I had. We had been talking about the issue of racism in general and one of the boys had described an incident on recent bus journey where he and some of his friends had been called 'a nigger' by a local bus driver.

PF - Is there any racism in school like that?

CHRIS - No way, there can't be, none of the teachers here are like that.

JUNIOR - I don't see nothin' me personally.

PAUL - The teachers here are alright in that respect.

PF - Are there any teachers who you would say are prejudiced?

JUNIOR - Na, not really. It's difficult to tell.

PAUL - I don't think there are. I don't think there's much racism in this school. In some schools there is though.

PF - Do you think black kids get a worse deal than white kids in this school?

PAUL - No I think we get treated more or less the same here. But I don't think we go on as many trips as we used to...Now we just don't go nowhere. That's probably why a lot of people don't like school no more. You know we used to like goin' on a trip, like an outing. Teachers don't say nothin' like that no more. So they just wag it or whatever.

The hostility then of the majority of Afro/Caribbean students at Milltown High to school did not hinge around perceptions of racism from the staff or the disadvantages they felt they faced as a group in the school. It appears to have derived largely from a more general dissatisfaction with what was on offer at school and their poor prospects after school. As such Afro/Caribbean students' feelings were similar to those of many of their white peers. Occasionally the hostility of Afro/Caribbean students was expressed using the vocabulary of 'racism', but such accusations did not specify incidents that were racist in terms of the definition I have used. Most of these students, whilst critical of many of the practices at the school, agreed that students of different ethnic background were treated equally and fairly. Milltown High in this respect seems to have been very different from the schools that Wright (1986) researched. Many of the Afro/Caribbean students that she talked to believed that the teachers were negative and antagonistic towards them and the school system worked against them. As a result they felt 'resentment, bitterness and frustration' towards the school. This does not appear to have been the case at Milltown High.

In terms of their relationships with other students, again both Afro/Caribbean and white students argued that racism was relatively insignificant. Nearly all said that on the whole black and white students mixed and got on very well in the school and there were very few conflicts which were influenced by racism. Girls especially pointed to the large number of ethnically mixed friendship groups that there were amongst students. This was largely confirmed by my own observations around the school. Whilst

friendship choices were clearly influenced by ethnicity and both boys and girls tended to choose friends from within their own ethnic group there were many exceptions. A large and dominant group of 5th year girls, for example, had many Afro/Caribbean and white members who shared common attitudes to school and youth cultural interests. Similarly, a dominant group of 5th year Afro/Caribbean boys included several white members. During my field work there were very few inter-student disputes or conflicts which were patterned by racism. In fact the only time I observed such a dispute was in Susan Parker's English lesson described in the chapter on the English department and this was perhaps more a personality clash than anything.

Whilst some of the students complained about racist name calling they said this was mainly confined to 'young' and 'cheeky' 'little kids', and ironically to Afro/Caribbean students themselves. An Afro/Caribbean girl explained:

I say it's equal in this school...You think when you hear of prejudice in the school you think it's the whites callin' the blacks or the whites callin' the Pakis, or whatever...but it's not it's the black people callin' the black, they're always callin' each other black this and black that, it's ridiculous really.

A number of teachers explained that amongst the Afro/Caribbean students there were status divisions which sometimes hinged around skin colour. On discussion with the students these appear to have taken contradictory forms. On the one hand students with a lighter skin tone, especially those of mixed race parentage, were insulted or made fun of because they were 'breeds' i.e. half-caste. On the other the term 'black' could be used as a term of abuse. On the whole though, such abuse was regarded as fairly harmless and did not result in overt conflicts.

I think there are three possible reasons for the lack of racially motivated clashes between Afro/Caribbean and white students at Milltown High. One, a point that I have made before, is that the area in which the school was situated has been multi-ethnic for a considerable number of years and has a long history of fairly co-operative and tolerant relationships between the two main ethnic groups. Students have generally been brought up in the area and attended multi-ethnic schools for the whole of their school careers. Anti-

Racism amongst both black and white youth was a dominant attitude. Secondly, those white students who did subscribe to racist beliefs, and there were some who voiced their prejudices to me in the privacy of the interview situation, were extremely reluctant to voice their views publically in the school. Afro/Caribbean students enjoyed a slight numerical superiority and were often dominant in peer group cultures. As one white student, who at the weekend associated with a gang of white youth outside the area put it, 'the best thing to do is to keep quiet in school or you'll get your head kicked in'. A third reason is that the teachers at Milltown High had succeeded in conveying the importance of Anti-Racism. A number of the students that I talked to were clearly very conscious of the stand of the majority of the staff on the issue of racism and agreed with it, sometimes censoring their peers for their racism. Clearly the teachers had been influential to some extent.

However, they had not been completely successful in eliminating racial abuse. The two students of Asian origin that I interviewed complained that they were sometimes subject to abuse, name-calling and hostility from other students, both Afro/Caribbean and white. The term 'Paki' was often used by students as a word of abuse around the school, despite attempts by staff to stop it. But although such abuse was clearly significant and offensive to these individual students, because they were such a small minority in the school it did not appear to affect relationships in general. Relationships between students from the two main ethnic groups were relatively amicable. Conflicts and tensions between students did exist but they were largely unrelated to race.

Social Differentiation at Milltown High School

Aspects of school organisation can be viewed as an elaborate social structure in which a powerful elite (teachers) accord differential amounts of status to students. Teachers control the allocation of students to different levels or ranks within that social structure and such ranks are generally accorded different treatment. In a streamed, academically orientated school the formal social structure is clearly demarcated as students are, early in their school careers, allocated to different classes/streams on the basis of their 'academic ability', and such classes are ranked one above the other in terms of status. Students are generally taught for all their lessons in the same group which becomes the basic unit of social organisation in the school. The social structure is reinforced by a number of differentiating rituals which form part of assemblies, speech days, prize givings, etc.. Such a structure is often rigid and although there is generally some upward and downward movement between streams this is usually short range. The majority of students remain in their original position in the hierarchy (see Hargreaves 1967 and Lacey 1970 for descriptions of schools like this).

Streaming, however, has been abandoned by many comprehensive schools as a basic pattern of organisation, in favour of more flexible and looser forms of grouping such as banding and setting. In a banded system students are allocated to one of several classes within a broad ability band. There may be three ability bands in the school, a 'top', 'middle' and 'bottom' band (see for example Ball 1981). With setting, school subjects are 'block timetabled' i.e. all students in a particular year group study the same subject at the same time, so that subject departments can adopt whatever system they think best suits their needs. Some departments choose to operate on the basis of a hierarchy of ability groups, others go for mixed ability grouping, others for a banded-type system. In such a system it is possible for individual students to be in different sets, at different levels of the academic social structure for different lessons. The rigidity of streaming with its hierarchy of consecutive ranks with the student confined to one level no matter what his ability in a particular subject is avoided in this system. A hierarchical social structure remains, but in a more flexible form.

A smaller number of schools have moved to a system of mixed ability grouping in which formal hierarchical distinctions are abandoned and students

are randomly allocated to groups and no formal differentiation occurs (4). However, in most comprehensive schools such a system is reserved for the first two or three years. At the end of year three, when students begin public examination courses and the influence of the labour market begins to be felt, setting becomes more common and students are allocated to 'option' groups catering for different ability levels. In practice, even in schools which espouse a commitment to mixed ability grouping, a formal social structure emerges at the beginning of year four (see Ball 1981).

Commentators on 'race and education' have become increasingly concerned with the way ethnic minority students fare within school social structures. They have not so much been concerned with the systems per se (5) but with two related aspects. First, the extent to which certain racial or ethnic groups tend to end up in low status groups and classes - the 'D' streams, 'C' bands, bottom sets, and 'special units' - which sometimes results in inferior treatment, demotivation and restricted opportunities. Second, the 'mis-allocation' of ethnic minority students to low status positions. It was a common complaint in the 1970s that teachers, because of their lack of knowledge and negative image of minority cultures and their reliance on culturally biased tests, underestimated the ability of many ethnic minority students and placed them in low status groups (see for example Coard 1971). More recently Driver (1979), Wright (1986) and Tomlinson (1986) argue that in many schools teachers tend to confuse academic ability and behaviour when making decisions about the placement of ethnic minority students, placing many of such students in lower groups than should be the case (6).

In assessing whether Milltown High provided a non-racist environment I was interested in whether the system of differentiation operating in the school disadvantaged students from particular racial or ethnic groups. There are three main ways in which this might occur. The first two involve the procedures by which students are allocated to classes in the school's social structure, and the third involves the treatment that classes of differing status receive.

Allocation to classes could be described as racist if teachers' racial attitudes influenced the decisions they made about student placement. For example, if Afro/Caribbean students were allocated to low status groups because teachers assumed that they were less intelligent, this would clearly be racist. The process of allocation might also indirectly disadvantage students from

particular racial or ethnic groups if the methods of evaluation used were culturally biased (in the sense that I used the term in the introductory chapter) or inaccurate. In both these cases students from particular racial or ethnic groups are likely to be 'mis-allocated'.

One possible indicator of this might be the actual distribution of students from different racial and ethnic groups in the formal school social structure. However, an unequal distribution of such students does not necessarily mean that the practices described above are occurring within the school. If Afro-Caribbean students, for example, are found to be over-represented in lower status classes this may be a result of the fact that they entered the school with lower achievement levels, perhaps as a result of home background disadvantages (material and/or cultural) or, in the case of entry to secondary schools, as a result of inferior treatment in the primary school. In other words, as I explained in my introductory chapter, inequality of outcome, in this case unequal distribution in the school social structure, is not necessarily an indicator of the operation of racially unfair practices within the school. In order to ascertain whether such practices existed it is necessary to study allocation procedures.

The third possible disadvantageous practice would be if, following differentiation, low status classes were treated less favourably. This might occur if, for example, they were given less teacher time and effort, poorer resources, the least effective teachers or taught an inferior curriculum. If such classes were made up of disproportionate numbers from particular racial or ethnic groups then this would be unjust.

All this, however, says very little about the principle of formal differentiation itself. Whilst accepting that there might be valid educational reasons for differentiation in some subjects at secondary school level, I would argue that the principles of Anti-Racism, and of social justice in education in general, would be advanced by, wherever possible, the postponement of formal differentiation until the later years of secondary education. There are four main reasons for this. First, postponing differentiation avoids the possibility of students who are allocated to low status groups receiving inferior treatment and consequent reduction in their opportunities. Second, it helps to avoid the effects of lowered self-esteem, anti-school attitudes and reduced motivation that often occur as a result of formal allocation to such groups. Third, it allows as long as possible for the student to develop his/her

abilities and experience a common curriculum (Lawton 1977) before competing for scarce opportunities and embarking on different curriculum tracks. Fourth, it allows teachers the maximum time to assess a student's ability and aptitude before making allocation decisions thus avoiding premature evaluation and categorisation. Where differentiation does occur I would argue that it is important for the system to be flexible and open in order to allow for the possibility of allocation to different status positions in different subject areas and of movement up or down the system.

I was thus interested generally in the nature of the system of formal differentiation adopted at Milltown High and more specifically in whether students from different racial and ethnic groups enjoyed equal treatment within the system. The following four sections of the chapter deal with these issues.

The formal system of differentiation at Milltown High

I have already explained that the system of banding that was in operation at Milltown High was abandoned shortly after the arrival of David Benyon as headteacher in 1984. He was fundamentally opposed to any formal, rigid system of ability grouping because of the dangers of labelling and possible discrimination and attempted to move as much as possible towards mixed ability groups. This he had succeeded in doing in the first three years, so that all classes here were mixed ability (with the exception of Languages who set at the end of the second year). The system of selecting out a 'remedial' or 'bottom' group was also abandoned with David Benyon's blessing and the Remedial Department became the 'Learning Support Department'. Students with 'special needs' were taught alongside their peers in mainstream, mixed ability classes, sometimes with the help of a Learning Support teacher. So formal differentiation of students had largely disappeared during the first three years at Milltown High.

At the end of the third year each subject department adopted its own system of setting. The English department were most in favour of mixed ability grouping (c.f. Ball 1981), but had decided to select out one 'top' set which could be 'pushed' through both English Language and English Literature, thus gaining two qualifications at 16+ instead of just one. Other English groups were 'mixed ability' and studied just English Language. All students were given

the opportunity to enter at least English Language at 16+ level. The Maths department were less sympathetic to the idea of mixed ability grouping. Although David Benyon had succeeded in persuading them to abandon setting in year 3 they still adopted a hierarchical system of setting from the end of the third year. Students in the top group had the opportunity of entering 'O' level. In other groups students studied for C.S.E.. Students in the bottom group were considered 'remedial' and did not work for public examinations.

The Science and Humanities departments operated a joint system of banding. Together they divided students into an upper and lower ability band. Usually approximately 40% of students would be allocated to the top band and 60% to the lower band. In Science the top band students studied either Physics or Biology to 16+ level and the lower band studied a general Science Studies course to C.S.E.. From within this lower band the Science teachers sometimes selected a 'difficult' group of students who were regarded as behaviour problems and, they felt, unlikely to achieve even a low grade C.S.E.. This group was selected so that 'the students in other groups could get on reasonably well without a load of hassle every lesson' (Science teacher), and was taught by one of the more experienced teachers in the department. In the 1985/6 fourth year there were relatively few girls in the lower band and so they were concentrated in the three 'non-difficult' groups. There were no girls therefore in the 'difficult' group. In the Humanities department both bands followed the same basic Integrated Humanities course. Those in the top band had the opportunity of entering for O level, but in fact the vast majority of students were entered for C.S.E.. A 'remedial' group were selected from the lower band and followed a non-exam course, taught by 'Learning Support' i.e. ex-Remedial department teachers. This practice was something of a hangover from the old system of banding and was abandoned in 1986/87.

The other school subjects (with the exception of P.E. and Social Education which were taught in mixed ability groups) became options at the end of the third year. Students 'chose' three subjects in addition to the six compulsory subjects - English (top set students took both Language and Literature), Maths, Humanities, Science, P.E. and Social Education. Although in theory all options were of equal standing, Spanish (O/CSE) and Chemistry (16+) were regarded as the 'academic' options and were reserved for 'high ability' students. They were placed in different 'option blocks' so that these students could chose both subjects if they wanted to. Set against Spanish were more practically based

courses such as College Craft Skills (a college linked course introduced to cater for students who it was thought required a more 'adult' and practical approach), Home Crafts (CSE), Home Economics (CSE) and Typing. Set against Chemistry again were the more practical courses of Control Technology (16+), General Studies (which consisted of a number of course units such as pre-driving, first aid, etc.), Ceramics and Pottery (CSE), and Office Practice (CSE). The third option block was made up of further practical and creative arts courses of 'equal' standing - Art (16+), Drama (CSE), Home and Community (CSE), College Craft Skills, and Craft/Design/ Technology (CSE). All of these option subjects operated on the basis of mixed ability groups, in which some students took formal exams and others did not, as most only had enough students for one group. Because of the relatively low student numbers in the school setting was not possible.

The system of formal differentiation which took place at the end of the third year at Milltown High was, therefore, rather complex. Students were not divided into streams or ability bands, but were allocated to various subject sets and option groups. There were, in fact, several status hierarchies and it was possible for students to be at different levels in different subjects. For many students this was the case. In fact they found themselves in a variety of different sets and option groups, and were rarely with the same group of peers two lessons running. Moreover, because of the system of block timetabling it was possible for at least the English and Maths departments to move students from set to set without affecting their position in other subject areas. Differentiation was in this sense fairly flexible. It is important to note also that, with the exception of the Maths department who operated a consecutive hierarchy of sets and the English top set, differentiation was into fairly broad bands which contained at least two classes of similar ability. Differentiation was also mainly confined to the main core subject areas, with the exception of the Spanish and Chemistry groups.

It was possible by a detailed look at the set and option lists to identify a relatively small group of approximately 22 students in the 1985/6 fourth year (7) who were in at least four of the six 'top' groups i.e. the English and Maths top sets, the Science and Humanities top bands, and the Spanish and Chemistry options. But although these students did form something of a high status group there were several whose position varied according to subject. Some, for example, were in the top set for English, but in a lower set for

Maths and there were others who were in just one of the top sets, but none of the others. Moreover, the group were not easily identified in the school. It did require careful scrutiny of subject set and option lists to work out who they were. It was even more difficult to identify any clear 'bottom group' (8). Only the Maths and Humanities department had clearly demarcated 'bottom' groups selected on 'academic' criteria. The Science department's 'difficult' group appeared to be selected mainly on 'behavioural' criteria. It was possible to identify 15 students who were in at least two of the following groups - either the 4th or bottom Maths set, the 'remedial' Humanities group, the Science 'difficult' group. But there were others, of course, who were in one of these groups but in higher sets in other subjects. The majority of students fell somewhere between these two groups occupying a variety of positions allocated by their various subject teachers.

Given this complex and flexible system the students themselves often found it difficult to identify where they or their peers stood in the school social structure. Although some that I talked to had a fairly accurate conception of their standing in each of the subject areas, others were confused about which set or band was which and what this meant in terms of their overall position. It must be said that, as far as I could see, teachers did little to clarify these matters. Several of the teachers explained that to draw attention to the relative standing of the various groups would be 'unfair' as it would make a public statement of a student's worth and expose them to the scorn of their peers. It would also serve to demotivate further many students who were already difficult to motivate, by publically labelling them. Furthermore, as we have seen, many of the staff were committed to an egalitarian educational philosophy which eschewed premature categorisation and were therefore reluctant to emphasise differentiation when it occurred. Differentiation was therefore concealed or at least not publically declared. Sets and groups, for example, were not referred to by the words 'top' or 'bottom' or the numbers 1, 2, 3, but by the name of the teacher. It was Mr.Smith's group or Mrs.Mitchell's class. When students were divided up into sets at the beginning of the academic year no mention was made of the relative standing of such groups and in school assemblies and other public school gatherings differentiating rituals were absent. As Furlong (1984) noted in his study of a group of Afro/Caribbean boys in a 'liberal' comprehensive school, 'the school had learned the lessons provided by social science of the 1960s. It had abandoned explicit streaming

and had broadened its curriculum and the pupils were therefore shielded from the full reality of their public evaluation' (p.232)(his emphasis).

The relationship between the process of 'polarisation' and formal differentiation consequently appeared less marked at Milltown High than in the schools studied by Hargreaves (1967), Lacey (1970) and Ball (1981). Here there was clearly a strong link between allocation to low status positions in the school social structure and 'anti-school' or 'delinquent' attitudes and behaviour, although as Hammersley (1985) notes the question of causation is problematic. At Milltown High there was a relationship between attitudes to school and low status position in the 4th and 5th years. In the interviews that I conducted with students those in low positions were far more likely to express anti-school attitudes and were also more likely to truant and get into trouble with staff. But the school, by postponing formal differentiation and adopting a flexible system when differentiation was introduced, had avoided the situation described by Ball in the banded Beachside Comprehensive where students were 'labelled failures' by a system 'that had not given them the opportunity to show their worth'. It was far less likely at Milltown High that students would come to see themselves as rejects of the school system early in their school careers and develop anti-school attitudes and behaviour as a result. What appeared more plausible was the alternative scenario that students with anti-school attitudes, derived from and developed outside the school in class, ethnic and youth subcultures, by their behaviour in school secured for themselves allocation to low status groups in the 4th and 5th year. (c.f. Willis 1977) Unfortunately I did not have the opportunity to systematically test this hypothesis.

School organisation at Milltown High certainly did not encourage the development of a single polarised anti-school group of the type described by Hargreaves (1967). Because of the lateness of formal differentiation and its flexibility, friendship choices were not restricted by formal status differentials within the school. In fact two large and dominant friendship groups that I observed in the 1985/6 4th year included students from a number of different positions in the school social structure. Moreover, mixed ability grouping allowed staff to switch potentially troublesome combinations of students from class to class thus reducing the opportunities for coherent anti-school groups to emerge (9). Whilst there was a tendency, especially towards the end of their school careers, for students to make friends with

those in similar positions in the school hierarchy, for attitudes to polarise and sub-cultural groups to emerge, this appeared to happen very late on at Milltown High.

The question of whether low status groups in the social structure received inferior treatment is difficult to answer, not least because of the problems of defining and assessing the idea of 'inferior treatment'. Certainly there was no evidence that low status groups received less teaching time or poorer resources than other groups, or that they were allocated the least experienced teachers (10) (as Hargreaves (1967) and Ball (1981) found in the schools they studied). In fact at Milltown High the situation tended to be the reverse - low status groups were often much smaller and therefore enjoyed a more favourable teacher-student ratio, and they tended to be taught by more experienced teachers. However, my impression was that low status groups were often regarded less seriously by teachers than high status exam groups. It appeared more common for teachers to accept lower standards of work and behaviour from them because they were anticipating that students were not going to succeed in public examinations. In contrast they were far more conscious with high status groups of the need to insist on high academic standards, set homework, and generally encourage students to succeed academically. Thus, for example, a much more studious atmosphere was encouraged in the top English set and students were 'pushed hard' to achieve academic success, and in the bottom Science/Humanities band the teachers appeared much more willing to accept lack of work in class than they were in the top band. Of course, given ability differences, it is understandable that teachers expectations of low status groups would be lower and thus they would be prepared to accept lower standards, but my impression was, and I must admit that this was only an impression, that in some of the low status groups the classroom ethos established was less likely to encourage the students to achieve to their full potential.

To summarise the formal social structure at Milltown High was a complex affair. In an effort to avoid premature categorisation, unfair discrimination and their demotivating effects, the staff, led by David Benyon, had introduced mixed ability grouping and postponed formal differentiation until the end of the 3rd year. Then a flexible system of subject setting and differentiation on the basis of option choice was introduced, but it must be emphasised that even here only the Maths department operated a consecutive hierarchical system, and

the majority of option groups were mixed ability. This system meant that the type of 'band stereotyping' noted by Ball (1981) which heavily influenced teaching styles and the development of student identities and careers had been eliminated at Milltown High. Student opportunities were not therefore limited by premature categorisation dictated by the formal social structure (at least before the 4th year). This is not of course to say that differentiation had been eliminated. It is clearly possible for informal differentiation and consequent polarisation to occur within mixed ability classes, something I will examine in a later section of this chapter. The system at Milltown High also gave less encouragement to the process of polarisation, and whilst there clearly were some students who were pro-school and many who were anti-school there was much interaction between them and the development of strong coherent sub-cultures was not marked. When formal differentiation occurred it was difficult to say conclusively that those allocated to low status groups received inferior treatment, but the ethos established in these groups did appear less conducive to academic success.

Ethnic minority students and differentiation

I now want to examine how ethnic minority students were distributed in the formal social structure at Milltown High school. Table 1 shows the gender and ethnic origins of students in the 4th year (11).

Table 1

	<u>Afro/Caribbean</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Asian</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Boys</u>	28%	26%	4%	58%
<u>Girls</u>	23%	19%	0%	42%
<u>Total</u>	51%	45%	4%	100% (N = 103)

As we can see boys outnumber girls in the year and Afro/Caribbean students slightly outnumber white. I explained above that it was possible to identify a 'top' and a 'bottom' group of students. Table 2 shows the numbers of students from the main ethnic groups in the 'top' group, Table 3 for the 'bottom' group.

Table 2 - The 'Top' Group

	<u>Afro/Caribbean</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Asian</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Boys</u>	2 (-19%)	4 (-8%)	1 (+1%)	7 (-26%)
<u>Girls</u>	9 (+18%)	6 (+8%)	0	15 (+26%)
<u>Total</u>	11 (-1%)	10 (0%)	1 (+1%)	22

(The percentage figures refer to the over (+) and under (-) representation of each group and are calculated by comparing each ethnic/gender group as a percentage of the whole year and as a percentage of the 'top' group.)

Table 3 - The 'Bottom' Group

	<u>Afro/Caribbean</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Asian</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Boys</u>	11 (+45%)	3 (-6%)	0	14 (+35%)
<u>Girls</u>	0 (-23%)	1 (-12%)	0	1 (-35%)
<u>Total</u>	11 (+22%)	4 (-18%)	0	15

(Percentage figures again refer to over (+) and under (-) representation)

Whilst obviously we are dealing with very small numbers of students here, the figures do show that Afro/Caribbean boys in the 4th year are less likely to be placed in the 'top' group than would be expected given their numbers in the year, but that Afro/Caribbean girls are more likely to be in the 'top' group. The same trend is true for white students - boys are less likely to be in the top group, girls more likely, although the trend is slightly less marked. Similarly boys, especially Afro/Caribbean boys, are more likely to be placed in the 'bottom' group (although here it must be noted that girls were deliberately not selected for the Science 'difficult' group)

Let us now look a little more closely at the distribution of students in the various subject sets in the 4th year. Table 4 shows this information for English, Table 5 for Maths, and Table 6 for Humanities and Science. Table 7 shows the ethnic make up of the Chemistry and Spanish options.

Table 4 - The English 'Top' Set

	<u>Afro/Caribbean</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Asian</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Boys</u>	1 (-24%)	5 (-4%)	0 (-4%)	6
<u>Girls</u>	10 (+21%)	7 (+11%)	0	17
<u>Total</u>	11	12	0	23

Table 5 - The Maths Sets

	<u>Afro/Caribbean</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Asian</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Set 1 - Boys</u>	6 (-6%)	9 (+7%)	1 (0%)	17
<u>Girls</u>	7 (+3%)	4 (-4%)	0	10
<u>Set 2 - Boys</u>	5 (-5%)	4 (-8%)	2 (+5%)	11
<u>Girls</u>	6 (+4%)	5 (+4%)	0	11
<u>Set 3 - Boys</u>	6 (0%)	5 (-2%)	1 (+1%)	12
<u>Girls</u>	5 (+1%)	4 (0%)	0	9
<u>Set 4 - Boys</u>	6 (+5%)	5 (+2%)	0 (-4%)	11
<u>Girls</u>	4 (-1%)	3 (-2%)	0	7
<u>Set 5 - Boys</u>	6 (+12%)	4 (0%)	0 (-4%)	10
<u>Girls</u>	2 (-10%)	3 (+1%)	0	5
<u>Total</u>	53	46	4	103

(Percentage figures again show over (+) and under (-) representation)

Table 6 - The Science/Humanities Top Band

	<u>Afro/Caribbean</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Asian</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Boys</u>	8 (-12%)	11 (-3%)	3 (+2%)	22
<u>Girls</u>	17 (+12%)	10 (+1%)	0	27
<u>Total</u>	25	21	3	49

Table 7 - The Chemistry and Spanish Options

	<u>Afro/Caribbean</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Asian</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Chemistry-Boys</u>	1 (-22%)	3 (-7%)	3 (+15%)	7
<u>Girls</u>	5 (+8%)	4 (+6%)	0	9
<u>Spanish - Boys</u>	3 (-1%)	0 (-26%)	0 (-4%)	3
<u>Girls</u>	4 (+13)	4 (+17%)	0	8

An examination of these figures confirms that there is a tendency for Afro/Caribbean boys to be under-represented in the top sets than would be expected from their numbers in the year as a whole, and for Afro/Caribbean girls to be over-represented (12). This is true for all the major subjects, although it is least marked in Spanish. A similar pattern emerges for white students, but it is not apparent in Maths. In terms of the formal social structure at Milltown High, as far as there is one, Afro/Caribbean boys appear to be more likely to be allocated to low status positions than other ethnic/gender groups, but Afro/Caribbean girls are more likely to be allocated to high status positions. Similarly white boys are more likely to be allocated to low status positions than all girls, and white girls are more likely to be allocated to high status positions than boys, although here the tendency is

less marked. There seems then to be a considerable inter-relationship of gender and racial/ethnic factors here.

It could be argued that this formal differentiation tends to disadvantage boys, especially Afro/Caribbean boys, and advantage girls especially Afro/Caribbean girls. However, this conclusion rests on the assumptions that low status groups received less favourable treatment and allocation to such groups served to reduce motivation. Whilst in all probability both did occur, I did not clearly established either and this conclusion must therefore remain tentative.

Allocation to groups

As I explained at the beginning of this section, the distribution of ethnic minority students in the school social structure does not tell us very much about the accuracy and fairness of the methods employed to allocate students to groups. It may well have been that the distribution of students in groups at Milltown High was a true reflection of their 'ability'.

In order to find out if this was the case I needed some 'objective' measure of students' 'ability' and to examine the procedures used to allocate students to groups. Unfortunately such measures of students' ability were not available. The students came from a number of different primary schools and the information supplied by them varied and was often incomplete. Some of the students' files contained the results of standardised tests conducted in primary school, but these were not available for all the students in the 4th year. Even if they had been available they would have been of little validity as measures of student ability at the end of the 3rd year at secondary school when the allocation to ability groups took place. Milltown High itself, along with other schools in Milltown L.E.A., had abandoned the use of standardised testing and screening a number of years previously and so there was no data of that form available. Moreover, the year prior to my field work, when the 4th year group that I was interested in were 3rd years, had seen severe industrial action on the part of the teachers. As a result few internal school exams had been conducted and reports had not been written. There were therefore unfortunately few records available of 'ability' which I could use.

However, I was able to reconstruct the process of allocation through discussions with the staff involved and observation of the system during my field work. As might be expected given the nature of the system of formal differentiation, the main departments at Milltown High adopted their own procedures for allocation (Science and Humanities worked together). But these did have quite a lot in common.

The English department did not set a formal exam, but based their decisions about which students were to be in the 'top' group on teachers' subjective views of students. The decisions were made at a meeting of all the teachers of 3rd year English groups held in the summer term of the students' 3rd year. Here teachers' typifications of students were traded and negotiated. At the meeting I observed (13). Jennifer Green, the head of Department,

proposed that they divide the students into four possible categories - 1) those who could definitely do Language and Literature, which she called 'the definite copers' i.e. those who were top group material (14), 2) those who could possibly do Language and Literature, that is those who 'have the skills and really ought to be in, but are lazy', 3) those who are 'just capable of G.C.S.E. Language' (which was to be introduced in the 1986/7 academic year), and 4) those who 'really need learning support'. The implication here was that there was a certain group of students that were unexaminable. During the meeting this move was supported by two of the teachers who pressed for the creation of a 'learning support group', of students who had severe difficulties with reading and comprehension and who should receive extra individual attention. The two teachers maintained, however, that they should not be denied the possibility of entering G.C.S.E.. This was eventually rejected in favour of the existing system of one top group and the rest 'mixed ability'.

The teachers then went through the tutor group lists and divided students into these four groups. There appeared to be three main criteria in operation, although these were never made explicit. I have based this conclusion on an analysis of the discussion at the meeting. First, there was the perceived ability of the student which was based on the written and oral work that he/she had completed for the English teacher(s) during previous years, especially the last. Second, was the perceived motivation of the student which was based on past behaviour and general demeanor in class, the amount of work completed and attendance. Third, was the perceived psychological state of the student which was important in judging whether he/she could 'cope' with the 'stress' of being 'pushed' for two examinations rather than just one. Again this was indicated by students' previous behaviour and orientation to school, teachers and school work. In short, decisions were based on teachers' subjective typifications of students' ability, motivation and psychological state, and therefore potential for academic success. For most of the students their placement was decided by their present 3rd year teacher indicating their suitability for one of the four groups, sometimes with a short accompanying explanation such as - 'He's a good worker, but not really a highflier, not very forthcoming, but should cope alright with G.C.S.E.' or 'He's bright, a little bit lazy, but he'll rise to the occasion, he'll benefit from pushing. Lang/Lit.'. For some, especially those who were in the group of 'possible Lang/Lits' i.e. border line 'top' group, there was more of a discussion. The opinions of other English

teachers who had taught or knew the student came into play here and a decision was negotiated following the swapping of summary typifications (see Hammersley 1980 and Beynon 1985 for descriptions of this process in staffroom talk). The following discussion illustrates the process:

JG - Now what about John? He was one of the brightest in that group in the second year.

AM - Yes, but he's very lazy. He's only done two decent pieces of work all year, and he's very immature. He's really stupid sometimes. I'm not really sure.

EA - But he's so intense, and he thinks an awful lot about things. He could be good in the Lang/Lit. group. I think he would respond well to that sort of environment.

AM - Well I suppose he must go in there really.

JG - So is it Lang/Lit.?

AM - Yes go on.

(Field notes)

Here the hesitation of the 3rd year English teacher in recommending a top group placement is overruled by the typifications of two other teachers who 'know' the student, and a top group placement is negotiated. In other cases the process worked the opposite way and 3rd year teachers were 'talked out' of a top group recommendation. In fact this was more common as in a subsequent meeting the numbers originally allocated to the top group had to be cut down. In short, then, the social construction and negotiation of student identities by the teachers in the context of these meetings resulted in a relatively small group being typified as capable of studying English Language and Literature to G.C.S.E. level and selected out for differential treatment.

In my discussions of this process of selection in the year prior to my field work with the teachers in the English department (for the 4th year groups that I have written about above) it became apparent that another criterion was important in determining which students were allocated to the top group. One of the more inexperienced teachers in the department was to take this group in the 1985/6 academic year. Given her inexperience and the difficulties that she sometimes had with classroom discipline it was thought unwise to place too many 'difficult' students in that particular group. During

the allocation process therefore a number of students who were defined as 'bright enough' were eliminated from consideration for the top group because of their record of past mis-behaviour. Interestingly the small number of students who were mentioned to me as coming into this category were all Afro/Caribbean boys, which perhaps accounts for the fact that there was only one Afro/Caribbean boy in the top English group in the 4th year. One particular Afro/Caribbean boy, for example, was described to me as 'capable of an incredibly high standard of work' but 'given his behaviour he would have destroyed (teacher's name) and the group'.

When I observed the process of allocation for the following year, as I have noted above, student 'behaviour' was used as a strong indicator of motivation and psychological state which were criteria on which decisions were made. It was not so much the case that the English teachers 'confused' ability and behaviour, although there clearly was a possibility of this given the system employed, but that past student behaviour was important in inferring 'motivation' and 'ability to cope with pushing' that were regarded as essential if those in the top group were to succeed. In fact, considerable importance was attached to the social and attitudinal make up of the top group because it was regarded as crucial that the group as a whole were successful and a hard-working, academic atmosphere with the minimum of disruption was established quickly. How this influenced decisions can be seen by one English teacher's comments on an Afro/Caribbean boy during the allocation meeting:

He's very bright, when he wants to be...I think he's in a category of his own. He's not done any homework, and when he gets into stressful situations with people pushing him he has difficulties. I think he'd be happier in the top of a middle group. In a Language group he might get a good grade, but in Lang/Lit he might blow his top and spoil it for the others. His attendance is erratic. I think he should be in a Language group.

Students who were 'bright', but defined as behaviour problems posing potential threats to classroom order, the 'good' working atmosphere and therefore to the success of the top group were clearly less likely to get into that group. Those who were 'less bright' but regarded as 'hard workers', 'keen' or 'conscientious' were more likely to get in. As Afro/Caribbean boys were

somewhat more likely to present behavioural problems to the teachers and therefore more likely to be regarded as unmotivated and anti-school than were Afro/Caribbean girls, and white students, then it is possible to infer that they found it more difficult to secure a place in the top group than would be expected if allocation was done solely on the basis of measured 'ability' (as also did individual Afro/Caribbean girls and white students who were perceived as behavioural problems). It is, of course, difficult to know for certain if this was the case without some measure of student 'ability'.

One or two comments are perhaps in order here. First, in the process of allocating students to the top set the English teachers did not use any formal 'objective' test of student ability. They relied totally on the their own subjective views. It is clearly possible that students may not display their 'full ability' in the context of the classroom situation (just as it is possible that they will not do so in the context of a formal examination room) perhaps because they do not get on well with the teacher or are simply not motivated enough to perform well in that situation. In evaluating students in this way teachers may be more likely to confuse ability with motivation . Also classroom teaching, as Hammersley (1977) has noted, can require students to develop certain rather distinctive 'cultural resources' in order to display 'ability'. In fact, it may be the case that different teachers provide different climates in which students can, or are motivated to, display 'ability'. Teachers' views of ability may therefore be inaccurate or imprecise. Moreover, it was clearly possible for the English teachers' individual conceptions of 'students who were capable of Lang/ Lit.' to be at variance, one teacher operating on the basis of slightly different criteria to another. All these factors enhance the possibility that 'mis-allocation' of students (from any ethnic group) may occur, although it is clearly difficult to say for certain that such 'mis-allocation' actually did occur. In order to assess student potential as accurately as possible and minimise this danger then a variety of methods ought to be employed and cross-checked.

It is clear from the above discussion that criteria other than academic ability were in operation in deciding on group allocation. Whether this should actually be the case is open to debate. It was argued by some teachers, for example, that it was important to consider the behavioural make-up of groups and that such a system provided the most beneficial, optimum arrangements for the majority of students. It might also be suggested that motivation and

psychological state are important and necessary considerations in determining a student's suitability for a top set place which is what teachers are attempting to assess. On the other hand it could be argued that 'ability' is the crucial factor and should be the only consideration, that behavioural criteria are irrelevant and involve culturally biased judgements, and that allocation to low status groups may further de-motivate able, anti-school students. My personal view is that the former arguments are more sensible. Motivation and commitment are clearly important qualities in determining a student's ability to use scarce opportunities and ought therefore to be assessed as part of the allocation process. As I explained in my introductory chapter some form of 'cultural bias' is inevitable in a system based on the principle of competitive equality of opportunity.

It was the former view also that predominated in the English department. This meant that Afro/Caribbean boys were less likely to be allocated to the top group because they were more often seen (individually rather than as a group) as behavioural problems and anti-school. Whether this constituted 'mis-allocation' depends on the criterion which one feels should be used in the allocation process. My view was that this was not a 'mis-allocation'.

I have described the procedures adopted by the English Department in considerable detail because I had the opportunity to observe them closely and they appeared similar to those in the other main departments. In Maths the 4th year group described above had been allocated to sets at the end of their 2nd year, although when I arrived in the school this process was postponed to the end of the 3rd year. The Maths teachers explained to me that usually all students took an examination before set placements were decided (unfortunately the results of this exam for the 4th year that I was concerned with were not available). At a departmental meeting the teachers would consider the students' 'suitability' for the different sets, special attention being given to the selection of a top set. The criteria used were 'ability' based on performance in the common exam and work completed during past years, and 'motivation' which was judged by attendance, behaviour and attitudes displayed towards Maths work and teachers. Again great emphasis was placed on the judgements of the class teacher who would make an assessment of 'suitability' for the top set, but this could be compared with the student's performance on the common exam. The Maths teachers then did not rely totally on the judgements of class teachers. It is difficult, however, to estimate the relative weights which were given to these two assessments. The head of department explained that there was a tendency for 'poorly motivated' or 'badly behaved' students who were 'quite able' to be allocated to lower positions in the set hierarchy than might be expected on 'ability' because a) it was often difficult to distinguish 'ability' and 'motivation' and b) that it was important that students in the top group were 'motivated' in order to do well in public exams. But he added that the teacher who specialised in 'remedial' Maths and always took the bottom groups would never take students solely because they were 'badly behaved'.

The allocation to positions in the Science and Humanities banding system involved a process of negotiation between the two departments. The Science department were concerned to select a top band that 'stood a reasonable chance of being successful' (Head of Science) in either the 16+ Physics or Biology course. On the basis of past experience when a large number of students allocated to the top band had not been 'up to the course' and the groups had therefore been 'very difficult', they had found that a rough 1/3-2/3, upper-lower band split worked best. Humanities favoured a 50:50 split. The result

was, in the words of the Head of Humanities, 'a compromise between the two'. The two departments met separately and each divided students into two bands. In Science this was done mainly on the recommendation of 3rd year class teachers who based their judgements on 'ability' displayed in class work and end of unit tests (the 3rd year Science curriculum was divided into half term units. Tests were usually, though not always, the same for each group) and on perceived 'motivation' based again on past student behaviour. Again it was difficult to estimate the relative weights given to these forms of assessment. In Humanities the upper/lower band division was based on: 'the class teacher's comments on whether the child is an upper or a lower band type - very unscientific!' (Head of Humanities). The class teachers appeared to base their recommendations on similar criteria to those used by the other teachers. However, no common examination was taken by all the students and so teachers' views were paramount. Following these departmental discussions the two heads of department met together and 'sorted the groups out'. Although I was unable to observe this meeting, from talking to the heads of department it seems that the procedures were similar to those adopted by the English department. Allocations were negotiated on the basis of teachers' conceptions of the 'suitability' for the upper band. The Head of Science did, however, emphasise that he felt that all students who were 'capable' of taking 16+ courses were allocated to the upper band.

When upper and lower band placements had been decided the two departments separately made their own allocation of students to classes within the bands. In the Science upper band students were asked whether they wanted to study Physics or Biology and students' gender perceptions appeared to be important here, more girls opting for Biology and more boys for Physics. In the Science lower band and in both Humanities bands student behavioural reputations were important and those who were regarded as 'trouble makers', especially if placed together, were split up. This also happened in the English 'mixed ability' groups. As I explained above, in the 4th year I studied the Science teachers had decided to create a male class of 'difficult' students, the majority of whom were Afro/Caribbean. The Humanities department selected a 'remedial' group of 'those who need most help' and again the majority were Afro/Caribbean boys. Again perceived motivation may have been important.

To summarise, given the relatively positive attitudes of most teachers at Milltown High to students' ethnicity I think it was unlikely that the

allocation of students to sets and bands in the mainstream courses was directly influenced by racist views. I certainly found no evidence of this. Allocation was based mainly on teachers' conceptions of 'ability', indicated by test results and completed class and home work, and 'motivation', indicated by behaviour. Also important were the teachers' concerns to establish a 'hard working atmosphere in the top groups' so that these groups could 'get on' with the minimum of disruption and also be rewarding to teach. There did seem to be a tendency therefore for 'bright' students who were perceived as 'behavioural problems' and therefore 'lacking in motivation' to not gain access to the top groups. Afro/Caribbean boys appeared most likely to be affected by this process, because they were more likely to be seen as behavioural problems. To repeat, I do not think this should be regarded as 'misallocation' because I believe that motivation is a relevant and necessary consideration in judging a students' suitability for a top set place.

Allocation to Groups - The Option System

Peter Woods (1979) has argued that option choice is 'a system of sponsorship mobility behind a "contest" mask' in which 'an illusion of choice' conceals the selection of high status students on to more prestigious courses and the channelling of others into less favourable curriculum routes. How did the system work at Milltown High?

In the summer term of the students' 3rd year the senior staff ran an assembly to explain the option system. In the year of my field work this was taken by the Head of Middle School. He explained the option system and advised the students against 'silly' choices which he suggested meant 'those that didn't fit in with what they wanted to do, those that they weren't interested in and those they chose to just be with friends'. Students were then given a booklet which described the option system and the courses that were on offer. After discussion with their class tutor and their parents students were asked them to make three choices (15) with two 'reserve' choices. Because of industrial action consultation with parents was limited. There was no parents evening in which parents could come into school to discuss their child's option choice and few parents contacted the school. The majority of students made their choices after fairly brief discussions with their tutor, subject

teachers, friends and sometimes parents, although a number of students that I spoke to claimed not to have talked with their parents.

However, as Stephen Ball (1981) notes option choice is influenced by a number of constraints. First there are practical constraints such as the distribution of subjects into option 'pools' and the limitation on group size because of teacher or resource availability. Second there are the constraints determined by the 'acceptability' of the option to student, parents and teachers. The latter appear to have most power in the negotiation of option choice because they are in a position to exercise 'professional judgement' about the 'appropriateness' of choices on the basis of their perception of the student's ability, motivation and behaviour.

There were similar practical constraints at Milltown High, though they were of a slightly different nature to the ones Ball describes at Beachside. Numbers were limited for some subjects and therefore some students did have to be 'redirected'. Those students who were absent when the option choices were made or were late in returning their forms seem to have particularly suffered here. But this problem was not common and it certainly did not apply to the 'academic options' of Spanish and Chemistry. The majority of option subjects, because of falling student numbers and relatively generous staffing, were undersubscribed i.e. they were relatively small groups and could easily take more students. A problem that was becoming more common was that some subjects (Music and Drama for example in 1986) were attracting so few students that it was impractical to run them as courses. Students who had originally opted for these courses had to re-choose. In fact some staff began 'canvassing' for students early on in the option choice system to be sure of attracting enough students. There were problems for a small number of students because of the distribution of subjects in option pools, but this again was less marked than at Beachside because the option system at Milltown High was more restricted, students only having to make three choices.

The majority of students at Milltown High I was told made 'appropriate' or 'sensible' option choices. In the words of one of the deputy heads, 'they stream themselves' or as a class tutor explained, 'they seem to know their own competence'. It seemed, in Ball's (1981) words, that most students 'during the first three years of secondary school (had) internalised the notions of their relative capabilities presented to them by staff' or had made their own judgements. This combined with a subtle process of 'counselling' from subject

teachers and class tutors during the choice period, and the fact that ability differentiation was not practised in the majority of option subjects meant that 'inappropriate' option choices were limited. Over-aspiration, where students opt for 'academic' courses which teachers feel are 'beyond them' and therefore have to be 'counselled' out, was only a minor problem. It was unusual for a 'non-academic' student to opt for Spanish or Chemistry and was therefore for the teachers of these options to reject them. In fact some were so concerned about the low numbers in their option that they were prepared to accept students whom they felt 'really didn't stand much of a chance' in order to ensure they had a viable group to teach. They also had the space to be able to give a borderline student who wanted to take the option 'a chance to have a go'. Of course, if a student who was considered completely 'inappropriate' opted for one of these courses he/she would have been rejected, but this rarely happened.

With a number of practical courses on offer underaspiration was, in fact, more of a problem and several tutors had to persuade 'bright' students of the importance of academic qualifications and to take the more academic options. What appeared to sometimes happen was that subject teachers would object to student option choice if the student was perceived as a 'discipline problem'. But this was generally not accepted by senior staff as a valid reason for rejecting the student's choice unless the particular group appeared to contain a disproportionate number of such students or an especially 'firey' combination or the member of staff was considered weak in handling such students.

Ball (1981) argues that at Beachside the system of option choice worked to the disadvantage of band two and three students who were predominantly working class. The prevalence of 'band stereotypes' and the fact that band two and three classes covered less syllabus ground meant they were often considered 'unsuitable' for high status academic options and were therefore excluded. Moreover, the mainly working class parents of band two and three students were less able and less likely to intervene in the option process and negotiate higher status positions for their children than the mainly middle class parents of band one students. He concludes that 'over and above the differences in measurable intelligence' the system was selecting disproportionate numbers of middle-class students and setting them on course for more favourable life chances.

My interest is of course in whether students of certain ethnic groups were similarly disadvantaged by the system at Milltown High. It did not appear to be the case that the system of option choice in operation here disadvantaged ethnic minority students, though Afro/Caribbean boys were slightly less likely than might have been expected to be in the Spanish and Chemistry options. The extent of differentiation which occurred through the option choice system was small anyway, and that which did occur was not limited by syllabus coverage in the first three years as all students followed a common curriculum taught in mixed ability groups. Negative views of students' race or ethnicity did not appear to influence teachers' views of the 'appropriateness' of students for courses. Moreover, with odd exceptions all students were equally disadvantaged by lack of parental involvement which was a result mainly of the teachers' industrial action. (Though no attempt was made to organise parental consultation during school time).

Differentiation in the Classroom - A Class Case Study.

So far I have confined my analysis to the formal social structure of Milltown High and how ethnic minority student fared in allocation to positions of social status within that structure. But the process of differentiation often occurs within individual classes which thus develop social structures of their own. Mixed ability grouping had been introduced at Milltown High partly as a response to the school's commitment to Anti-Racism and because it was seen as a fairer, more egalitarian system. I was therefore interested in the extent to which in-class differentiation occurred in such mixed ability classes and how ethnic minority students fared in such processes. I was concerned with three basic questions. First, did differentiation occur at the classroom level? If so, how was it communicated to students and did it result in social selection and differential treatment, the 'sponsoring' of high status students that Ball (1981) claims occurred at Beachside Comprehensive? Secondly, what positions did ethnic minority students come to occupy in classroom social structures? And third, what treatment did ethnic minority students receive in comparison to their white peers as a result? I speculated that if teachers were operating on the basis of unadmitted racist views then it would be likely that ethnic minority students would be allocated to low status positions in classroom social structures and differentially treated as a result. It was also a possibility that if ethnic minority students occupied the lower status positions that this could have been due to the fact that they were less highly regarded in terms of the traditional notions of the 'ideal student' that teachers typically employ. If this was the case and the students were differentially treated, then here, I thought, would be a clear case of school processes indirectly disadvantaging them.

Within the time that I had available at Milltown High it was only possible to conduct a small scale study of these questions. I decided to conduct a case study of one mixed ability class and five of their teachers. I selected the group, one of the three 3rd year classes, which I will refer to as 3GH, for a number of practical and theoretical reasons. First, I wanted a class that roughly reflected the ethnic make up of the school as a whole. 3GH did more than the other 3rd year classes. In 3GH there were 14 boys - 8 Afro/Caribbean and 6 white, and 8 girls - 4 Afro/Caribbean and 4 white, 22 students in all. The Afro/Caribbean boys were a slightly larger proportion than in the school

as a whole, but the proportions were not far off the same. Second, I wanted to study a class with a number of different teachers, but did not want to spend a great proportion of the time looking at practical subjects where the students were often grouped slightly differently. As, by the time I came to conduct the case study, the school had introduced its Integrated Curriculum in the first two years and classes were taught by one teacher for most of their mainstream lessons, I decided to restrict myself to a third year class. Third, I speculated that the processes that I was interested in would be most likely to be found in a 3rd year class, as these classes were closest to the point at which formal differentiation began. Moreover, by this time classroom social structures would have become fairly stable and routinised as teachers would know the students fairly well (see Brophy and Good 1974).

I decided, then, to concentrate on 3GH and approached some of their teachers. Five of them agreed to help me (16) and to allow me to observe approximately eight (each) of their lessons with the class during the 2nd half of the Autumn term, 1986. Before observing the class I interviewed each of the teachers in the week before and week after half term and asked them their general feelings about the class, the teaching strategies they employed, and how they saw each of the students in the class. It was the 2nd year that the Humanities and Maths teachers had taught the group so they knew them fairly well. The Humanities teacher thought they could sometimes be 'a difficult class' but there were some 'good kids'. They were fairly typical of classes at Milltown High, but not quite as able as other third year groups he had taught. The Maths teacher, however, did not have a very high opinion of them. He thought they were 'one of my most difficult groups'. This was partly, he felt, because they were 3rd years, but also because he was having to teach them as a mixed ability group which he thought was impractical given the range of ability in the class and the fact that the department did not have adequate resources for mixed ability teaching. The English and Science teachers were relatively new to the class. The Science teacher was a probationary teacher and had taken the class over at the beginning of term. When I interviewed him he felt that he had 'just about got to know them'. On the whole he thought the class were 'very good really'. 'They could', he said 'get a bit out of hand', but usually 'you can get a good lesson's work out of them'. The English teacher, one of the more experienced teachers in the department, had recently taken over the class for half a term because their usual teacher was finding her

timetable rather taxing and 3GH difficult to handle. She had, however, taught the class when they were 1st years and so knew them reasonably well. She thought they were 'not a bad group'. 'There are certain characters that can be demanding, but if you keep their heads down they're usually O.K.', she explained. The Art teacher did not teach the whole group. For practical subjects the students were split into smaller groups and he only had 13 of the full 22 in the class. He thought some of the students 'quite demanding' but felt that in Art they were 'usually O.K.' as most of them liked the subject and he 'kept a fairly tight reign on them'.

The teachers' typifications of individual students and their confidence in attributing definite characteristics to them varied according to how long they had taught the class. As Ball (1981) notes, mixed ability grouping does not supply the teacher with pre-existing typifications of students based upon their location in the school social structure as does streaming or banding. Teachers have to 'make' rather than 'take' the identities of their students from their interaction with them. The Science teacher was very much at what Hargreaves et al. (1975) call the 'elaborative' stage with many of the students. In other words he had formulated 'working hypotheses' about many of them and was in the process of observing them and learning more in order to verify or modify his original views. His typifications, therefore, were rather tentative and he constantly qualified his comments about the students. The other teachers were more sure of their ground. Their views had 'stabilised'. They had a clearer and more certain conception of the student identities and 'types', although the English teacher was a little less sure as she was having to re-verify typifications made when the students were 1st years.

I have not got the space here to discuss individual teachers' typifications in detail, many of which were long and elaborated. Two points, however, are important. First, their typifications were strongly evaluative and revealed clear positive and negative views of students based on the extent to which they conformed to their notion of the 'ideal student' (Becker 1952). In the main the teachers typed the students in terms of two key constructs of academic ability, and classroom behaviour, the latter being used as an indicator of a student's motivation, orientation to school, teachers and school work, and personality. In fact the constructs that the teachers used were similar to those which researchers have found other teachers use (Nash 1973, Hargreaves, Hester and Mellor 1975, Ball 1981). The information they used was

derived from the oral and written work completed by the student, observed behaviour in classroom interactions and around the school, attendance, and the stories and comments of other teachers. In fact it was largely the extent to which students conformed to the teacher's notion of the ideal student in these respects that determined their status in the teacher's eyes. Teachers did, then, differentiate quite strongly between the students, and the class did form a status system in their eyes. The second point to make is that none of the teachers made reference to racial or ethnic features in order to typify the students. These characteristics appeared to be unimportant to teachers' typifications of students. This is not to say, of course, that they did not in their unarticulated conceptions of the students attribute certain characteristics to them on the basis of racial or ethnic features, merely to say that in typifications revealed in interviews with me this was not apparent (17). It is also not to say that the constructs they used to differentiate were not such that differences between ethnic groups resulted. Both were clearly possibilities.

Having established that the teachers differentiated quite strongly between students in the class I asked each of them to rank the students in terms of a) 'academic ability' and b) 'behaviour'. This I hoped would give me a fairly clear picture of the class social structure. The following table shows the results of their ranking. The students in the class have been divided into ethnic and gender groups, and are listed in alphabetical order by surname within those groups. The class social structure becomes clearer when one consults the graphs in appendix 1.

Table 8 - Academic and Behavioural Rankings of 3GH by Teachers

	<u>Humanities</u>		<u>English</u>		<u>Science</u>		<u>Maths</u>		<u>Art</u>	
	<u>Acab</u>	<u>Beh</u>	<u>Acab</u>	<u>Beh</u>	<u>Acab</u>	<u>Beh</u>	<u>Acab</u>	<u>Beh</u>	<u>Acab</u>	<u>Beh</u>
<u>Afro/Caribbean</u>										
<u>Girls</u>										
Claudine	4	9=	2=	15=	12	11	8	13	8=	5=
Sharon	11	9=	2=	7=	15	8	9	6	8=	5=
Lisa	20=	19=	20=	19=	21	20	15	22	12=	13
Nancy	2	1	2=	1=	7	5	21	1	1=	1=
Average rank	9.25	9.5	6.5	10.5	13.75	11	13.25	10.5	7.25	6
<u>Afro/Caribbean</u>										
<u>Boys</u>										
Martin	1	9=	1	7=	6	12	13	8		
Wayne	8	8	9=	7=	3	17	4	14		
Lloyd	12=	13=	9=	7=	16	16	14	12		
Steven	19	2	22=	1=	19	3	22	2	6=	1=
Kevin	16=	13=	16=	15=	14	14	16	9	10=	5=
Lee	14	13=	9=	7=	18	7	7	16		
Gary	20=	19=	16=	19=	17	21	5	20	12=	11
Peter	3	13=	9=	19=	8	22	12	19	3=	12
Average rank	11.63	11.25	11.38	10.25	12.63	14	11.63	12.5	7.75	7.25
<u>White Girls</u>										
Susan	5=	3=	2=	1=	1	2	1	7		
Kate	9	3=	2=	1=	2	4	2	11		
Alex	12=	3=	9=	1=	9	1	18	4		
Julie	5=	3=	2=	1=	4	6	3	5	1=	1=
Average rank	7.75	3	3.75	1	4	3.25	6	6.75		
<u>White Boys</u>										
David	10	17=	9=	7=	11	13	10	10	10=	4
Alan	7	3=	2=	7=	5	10	6	2		
John	15	17=	16=	15=	10	15	19	15	3=	5=
Darren	20=	21	20=	19=	22	19	11	21		
Paul	16=	22	16=	7=	20	9	17	17	3=	10=
James	16=	12	9=	15=	13	18	20	18	6=	5=
Average rank	14	15.33	12	11.66	13.5	14	13.83	13.83	5.5	6

Before considering the picture which emerges from these rankings I must point out that the individual teachers involved interpreted my request for rank orders slightly differently. As can be seen from the table three of the teachers placed some students at equal levels whereas two did not. The placing of several students at the same rank by the English teacher can perhaps be seen as an indication of her tentative retying of the students and a reluctance to categorise them prematurely.

What picture emerges from this data? First, it is clear that the social structure of a secondary school class is highly complex. Whilst there is considerable overall similarity between the rankings of different teachers, it is clearly possible for individual students to be at different levels of the hierarchy in different subjects. If differentiation is communicated to students many will therefore receive different and sometimes conflicting messages about their worth. Secondly, it is worth noting that for most of the students there is a strong relationship between their position in the academic and behavioural hierarchy, with the main exception of Steven who is favourably perceived in terms of behaviour but regarded as academically very weak by all but the Art teacher.

Overall there is no significant tendency for Afro/Caribbean students to occupy lower status positions in academic or behavioural rankings in any of the subjects. Whilst there are differences between the two ethnic groups in terms of average ranking which show that Afro/Caribbean students tend to be ranked slightly lower than white, the differences are small. A stronger tendency is for boys to be ranked on average lower than girls, which occurs in all the subjects on both the ranks, especially behaviour. Boys are therefore more likely to occupy low status positions.

A closer look at the table and graphs shows that the four white girls in the class - Susan, Kate, Alex and Julie, are consistently highly perceived by all the teachers (only one is in the Art group) especially in terms of behaviour, as is one of the Afro/Caribbean girls - Nancy. One of the white boys - Alan, and one of the Afro/Caribbean boys - Martin, who interestingly was the only 'middle-class' student in the class (his father was a polytechnic lecturer and ex-community worker), is also well perceived. At the other end of the scale four white boys - John, Darren, Paul and James, three Afro/Caribbean boys - Kevin, Gary and Peter, and one Afro/Caribbean girl - Lisa, are fairly consistently poorly perceived. The other seven students - two Afro/Caribbean

girls - Claudine and Sharon, four Afro/Caribbean boys - Wayne, Lloyd, Steven and Lee, and one white boy - David, lie in between the two groups. In fact this social structure is fairly consistent, with one or two minor exceptions, to the four main teachers.

After interviewing the teachers of 3GH I began to observe some of their lessons and attend their registration time in the morning and afternoon. It became apparent from these early informal observations that the class could indeed be 'difficult' especially if the teacher handled them 'inappropriately'. Both the Maths and Science teachers had considerable problems with classroom control, so much so that the students got completely out of hand on occasions and they were unable to organise the lesson as they had planned, resorting to 'survival' tactics to maintain some semblance of order. Indeed, after two lessons the Maths teacher asked me not to observe his lessons as he felt my presence placed him under stress and compounded his problems. In Humanities, English and Art the class were much better behaved. The teachers here seemed more skilled in classroom management, although of course the Art teacher had a much smaller group. My observation therefore was confined to Humanities, English, Science and Art.

Having established that the teachers of this mixed ability class did differentiate the students in terms of their conformity to their notion of the 'ideal student', I was interested in how this affected their behaviour towards the students in the classroom. Was such differentiation communicated to the students? If so how? Did it result in differential treatment of students - the 'sponsorship' of highly perceived students? And how did this relate to student's ethnicity?

In answer to the first question it seemed that the teachers often made a great deal of effort to conceal their academic differentiation. The five teachers all argued that in a mixed ability class it would be 'unfair' to publicly evaluate students in terms of their academic ability. The students, they believed, had inherently different aptitudes and abilities which partly caused their different attainments. This was essentially what a mixed ability class was. It would be unjust therefore to continually draw attention to differential attainment. Two of the teachers also pointed out that the students themselves could be 'nasty' to each other by making fun of those who were publicly labelled 'low ability', a practice that they did not wish to encourage. Moreover, they had developed their own common-sense theories of the relationship between differentiation and student attitudes, arguing that overt and 'insensitive' evaluation of academic ability would lead to a decline in student motivation which could cause problems of classroom control. They

believed that many of the students would become hostile, lose motivation and 'switch off' if attention was continually drawn to their relative academic failure. Therefore when class tests were held marks were not read out, and when 'marking' work most of the teachers had abandoned giving numerical marks indicating achievement relative to others in the class, in favour of comments or broad grades which were intended to relate more to 'effort'. Furthermore, all of the teaching that I observed with 3GH was class based. Students were all expected to complete the same tasks with the same curriculum materials, although those who finished work first were usually given extension work. Seating was not based on ability differentiation and groups of students were not extracted or singled out for differential treatment. The English department, for example, had abandoned the practice of withdrawing students with reading difficulties for special help, and had introduced a system where a learning support teacher offered help within the classroom. This teacher, when in the class, did not focus their attention on specific individual students who thereby became identified as 'low ability', but assisted any student who needed help with a particular piece of work (18). In short, the teachers appeared to make considerable efforts to conceal their academic differentiation of students. It was therefore sometimes difficult for students to tell their exact position in the academic class hierarchy.

However, as Ball (1981) notes differentiation by academic ability can be communicated to students subtly through 'cues' given by the teachers in the normal routine of classroom interaction. With 3GH occasionally students would persuade a teacher to publicly give them their mark in a class test, and sometimes students compared the marks they had been given on returned test papers. Similarly they would sometimes swap the comments that the teacher had written on their work. As Jackson (1968) points out students very early in their school careers become accustomed to evaluation and it seems that they continue to expect it. Evaluations of worth were also conveyed in public (given the physical nature of classrooms very little teacher-student interaction is private) comments made to students when marked work was returned or when work was marked in the classroom. They were also conveyed when the teachers called upon some students more than others to read aloud or answer questions in class, although such differential treatment was not marked (see below), or when specific questions were directed at certain students. In a Humanities lesson, for example, a particularly difficult question emerged and the teacher

addressed it to Martin, whom he regarded as of high ability, with the words, 'We'll try Martin, he should be able to think this one through.' Teachers' responses to students' participation in classroom talk also contained evaluative elements as some students' answers were affirmed and praised and others were not (although the use of overt praise and criticism was not common). Cues were also sometimes contained in the pacing of classroom work as in:

Hands up all those who have finished the first five questions. Come on you others we haven't got all day. (Science lesson)

Hands up those who have got up to question 7. O.K. hands up those who have finished question 5. Is there anybody who has not finished question 3? (Humanities lesson)

And in teacher talk designed to motivate, for example:

Two people have finished so far, both have given very good answers. I'm sure not everyone has finished. You'd better get on please. (Humanities lesson)

However, in the lessons I observed this 'cuing' was not common and on the whole the teachers I observed at Milltown High did tend to conceal academic differentiation (19).

It was more difficult for teachers to conceal their differentiation of students on behavioural criteria. As the maintenance of classroom order is paramount to a teachers' own status and self-esteem (see D.Hargreaves 1975, Denscombe 1980) and considered by most teachers to be essential for 'learning' to occur, it becomes crucial that classroom rules are maintained and enforced. Thus students who contravene classroom rules are generally publicly rebuked or punished. By drawing attention to or imputing deviance in this way the teacher is not only punishing the rule breaker and publically affirming the classroom rule system (c.f. Durkheim 1938) (20), but also making a public statement of the status of the student's behaviour. Repeated references to certain students give clear cues as to the student's status or lack of it. The teachers at Milltown High were also less keen to conceal behavioural differentiation. After all, they

maintained, students did not have different inherent capacities to conform to classroom rules. As one teacher said, 'they can all be expected to behave, whereas we can't expect them all to do A level Maths'. All students could be expected to 'make an effort' or 'try hard'. Public behavioural differentiation was therefore considered perfectly fair.

Teachers of 3GH reacted to classroom deviance in a wide variety of ways from 'having a quiet word' or merely naming the student verbally or non-verbally, to giving detentions and sending them out of the room. Sometimes a student who was consistently badly behaved would be placed 'on report' and had to carry a card around with them and give it to every teacher so that they could note their comments on their behaviour or 'effort' (21). The teachers at Milltown High had also instigated a complex system of grading students in terms of 'effort' and 'behaviour' for each individual lesson. In an effort to discourage deviance the teachers of 3GH (and several other classes) gave each student a grade from A to D at the end of each lesson. These grades were recorded on a sheet of paper which was taken from lesson to lesson by one of the more 'reliable' members of the class and grades were totted up at the end of the day. A student who received two grade C's or worse was placed in detention. A list of detentions received completed and owing was placed on the registration classroom wall and was a frequent topic of teacher-student talk in registration/tutorial time. The extent to which a students' behaviour was reacted to in these ways by the teachers was a clear indication to the student and to his/her peers of the extent to which he/she was conforming to the teacher's notion of appropriate behaviour and therefore of the student's behavioural status. It was quite clear, for example, that Steven who was never reprimanded, rebuked or graded lower than B by any of the teachers was of much higher behavioural status than say Lisa who was frequently admonished, detained, sent out of lessons and graded D.

Behavioural status was also conveyed in more subtle ways by the teachers. Certain students, mainly the highly perceived girls, were selected to do special jobs because they could be 'trusted' to do them 'properly'. They were frequently the ones who were asked to distribute or collect in equipment, take messages or carry the 'grade sheet'. Sometimes a teacher's joke or flippant remark could contain indications of status as when the Humanities teacher questioned Gary about the meaning of 'pesticide' because 'you should know quite

a lot about that!'. So in various ways the teachers' differentiation of students in behavioural terms was communicated in the classroom.

I now want to turn to the question of whether differentiation resulted in differential treatment and the 'sponsoring', i.e. the favourable treatment, of highly perceived students, and if this related to students' ethnicity. This proved an extremely difficult question to investigate. In all the mixed ability classes that I observed during my field work at Milltown High whole class teaching, and a common curriculum and work tasks was the norm. There was little obvious differential treatment such as the singling out of high status groups to do different types of activity or to study different curriculum materials, and it did not seem from my general observation of classes that teachers spent more time with or devoted more attention to high status students. Moreover, none of the teachers that I interviewed claimed to single out high status groups for differential treatment. Most argued that this would be 'favouritism' which would be contrary to their egalitarian principles and professional philosophy (22). Furthermore they pointed out that the students themselves would soon spot and react adversely to such unequal treatment. It was more acceptable and seemed more common for a teacher to spend more time with and devote more attention to students of low academic status because 'they find the work difficult to cope with', hoping by doing so to narrow the gap that existed between them and their 'more able' peers.

There did seem to be a tendency for teachers to have more positive interactions with students of high behavioural status, but this often appeared to be a reaction to the poor behaviour and frequently hostile attitudes of some of the students themselves rather than something which sprang independently from the teacher. Obviously, student behaviour and teacher's perception of the student interact in complex ways in influencing teacher action. It was clear, for example, that some teachers would avoid interaction or certain types of interaction with some students whom they perceived to be 'difficult to handle' or 'disturbed' (23). There also seemed to be a tendency for teachers to be more demanding in terms of the questions they asked of and written work they demanded from students whom they perceived as high ability, although it should be pointed out that some differential treatment might be anticipated where students are perceived to be of different ability. However, it was difficult to establish clear patterns of such differential treatment. I have already commented that I did not observe any differential treatment on the basis of

students' ethnic group and moreover none was reported to me by staff or students.

Differential treatment, then, if it happened, occurred very subtly. In order to examine this issue more closely in this class case study I decided to employ a more structured system of classroom observation. I used, with modifications, the Brophy and Good Dyadic Interaction System (Brophy and Good 1970, 1974, 1984). The advantage of this system of coding classroom events is that it does not focus on teacher behaviour in general but on teacher interactions with individual students. So it does not attempt to code all teacher behaviour. It excludes occasions when the teacher is addressing the class as a whole, but systematically and separately records teacher interactions with each individual student in a class. It is therefore most useful in assessing whether teachers treat students differently, and if so in what ways, to what extent and which particular students or groups of students are affected. It also allows the researcher to distinguish between those interactions which are initiated by teachers and which by students, and examine the sequential aspects of interaction. (see Appendix 2 for the coding scheme employed). In order to increase the accuracy of my coding of classroom events I also tape recorded the lessons and checked the data by coding from the tapes after the lesson. Even so coding complex classroom interactions proved difficult and the reliability of much of the data is questionable. For this and a number of other reasons the exercise proved rather inconclusive.

One of the main problems was that in the number of lessons observed (10 Humanities, 9 English, 8 Science and 6 Art) there was not enough interaction codable under certain sections of the coding scheme to enable me to come to any valid conclusions about differential treatment. Brophy and Good (1974) suggest that the number of teacher questions directed specifically to different students is one way of assessing differential treatment. But in two of the classrooms I observed (Science and Art) the teacher/student public interaction was extremely limited and few direct questions were asked of students in this way. Both teachers addressed the class for short periods usually at the beginning of a lesson, but this was generally to give instructions about the seat work that they wanted the students to do, not to engage in a teacher/class discussion. Apart from this the only teacher/student public interactions concerned disciplinary/behavioural matters. It was not possible therefore to use the number of questions addressed to students or teacher responses to student answers in public interaction as measures of differential treatment. Brophy and Good also propose that one of the best ways of assessing differential treatment stemming from the teacher's perception of the student, rather than from the actual behaviour of the student in the classroom, is the extent to which teachers respond to correct student answers to their questions with praise and wrong answers with criticism. However, in the classrooms I observed none of the teachers made much use of public praise with any of their students, and criticism of wrong answers was also limited (behavioural criticisms were far more common). Answers to questions were generally affirmed, negated or summarised, but rarely overtly praised or criticised. It is perhaps worth pointing out that Brophy and Good's observation schedule was designed for use in elementary schools where perhaps public praise and criticism are more common. Similarly student initiated questions and statements in public interaction were rare except in English, and the number of student responses in public interaction given no feedback were minimal in all the subjects. The data presented below, then, includes the few measures for each teacher which I feel can be validly used to estimate the extent of differential treatment occurring (or not occurring) in the classrooms I observed. Students have been grouped first by status for each teacher, and secondly by gender and ethnic background to see if differential treatment occurred on either basis.

Table 9 - Teacher/Student Interaction - Humanities

	<u>Ethnic/Gender Group</u>				<u>Status Group</u>		
	<u>WG</u>	<u>WB</u>	<u>ACG</u>	<u>ACB</u>	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>L</u>
<u>Public Interaction</u>							
<u>Teacher Init. Response Opps.</u>							
No. reading turns	2.8	0.7	0.6	0.8	2.6	0.3	0.2
No. direct questions	13.4	10.4	5.9	6.1	11.9	5.9	6.9
No. open questions	1.3	0.7	0.3	1.1	1.5	0.6	0.6
Total teacher init. response opps.	17.5	11.8	6.8	8.0	16.0	6.8	7.7
<u>Student Init. Response Opps.</u>							
Call out answers to ques.	0.5	1.3	0.5	1.9	0.5	1.7	1.8
<u>Teacher Feedback</u>							
% wrong answer, don't know, no resp. followed by repet., rephrase or clue	57.8	36.8	37.5	29.4	58.0	43.7	35.7
Behavioural criticisms or warnings	1.3	7.5	13.2	3.0	4.0	4.8	8.7
<u>Private Interaction</u>							
<u>Teacher Initiated</u>							
Work related contacts	2.6	0.7	1.9	1.6	1.5	1.9	1.4
<u>Student Initiated</u>							
Work related contacts	3.4	4.1	2.3	3.4	3.1	3.1	4.1

Table 10 - Teacher/Student Interaction - English

	<u>Ethnic/Gender Group</u>				<u>Status Group</u>		
	<u>WG</u>	<u>WB</u>	<u>ACG</u>	<u>ACB</u>	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>L</u>
<u>Public Interaction</u>							
<u>Teacher Init. Response Opps.</u>							
No. reading turns	1.2	1.4	1.0	1.4	1.1	1.1	1.7
No. direct questions	2.8	4.6	3.6	5.0	2.3	4.6	5.0
No. open questions	4.2	9.5	8.0	10.1	6.7	8.3	9.0
Total teacher init. response opps.	8.2	15.5	12.6	16.5	10.1	14.0	15.7
<u>Student Init. Response Opps.</u>							
Student init. statements or questions	1.1	2.6	1.0	2.8	1.0	2.1	3.5
Call out answers to ques.	0.6	4.3	2.0	6.7	0.7	5.0	7.0
Total student init. response opps.	1.7	6.9	3.0	9.5	1.7	7.1	10.5
<u>Teacher Feedback</u>							
% wrong answers followed by repet., rephrase or clue	24.0	20.0	29.4	32.2	20.8	31.4	26.4
Behavioural criticisms or warnings	2.0	7.3	6.6	9.5	2.9	8.9	8.2

<u>Private Interaction</u>							
<u>Teacher Initiated</u>							
Work related contacts	1.7	2.9	2.3	3.2	1.3	2.9	4.0
<u>Student Initiated</u>							
Work related contacts	2.8	5.1	4.0	6.0	2.3	4.8	7.5

Table 11 - Teacher/Student Interaction - Science

	<u>Ethnic/Gender Group</u>				<u>Status Group</u>		
	<u>WG</u>	<u>WB</u>	<u>ACG</u>	<u>ACB</u>	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>L</u>
<u>Public Interaction</u>							
Behavioural criticisms or warnings	1.6	12.8	6.9	14.6	2.5	12.9	16.1
<u>Private Interaction</u>							
<u>Teacher Initiated</u>							
Work related contacts	4.0	3.4	3.1	4.4	2.7	4.2	4.5
<u>Student Initiated</u>							
Work related	4.8	4.2	3.4	6.0	2.9	6.1	5.4

Table 12 - Teacher/Student Interaction - Art

	<u>Ethnic/Gender Group</u>				<u>Status Group</u>		
	<u>WG</u>	<u>WB</u>	<u>ACG</u>	<u>ACB</u>	<u>H</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>L</u>
<u>Public Interaction</u>							
Behavioural criticisms or warnings	0.0	6.0	5.8	3.4	2.0	5.6	7.7
<u>Private Interaction</u>							
<u>Teacher Initiated</u>							
Work related contacts	12.0	11.5	10.0	12.1	7.0	8.0	21.0
<u>Student Initiated</u>							
Work related	16.0	13.5	11.7	22.2	10.0	12.7	23.3

(WG = White girls, WB = White boys, ACG = Afro/Caribbean girls, ACB = Afro/Caribbean boys, H = High status, M = Middle status, L = Low status. Status was assessed by combining the academic and behavioural rank of the student for the particular teacher and dividing the students into three groups on the basis of their composite rank for each teacher. In a number of cases students were in different status groups for different teachers.

Scores for each student group were adjusted for student attendance by dividing the total number of interactions for each group by the total number of student lessons attended. They were then multiplied by ten to give the average number of interactions per student in the group per ten lesson period).

What do these figures tell us about differential treatment of students in 3GH? For the Art and Science teachers the answer is, unfortunately, not very much. With both these teachers the vast bulk of teacher/student interaction was of the form of 'private' one-to-one teacher/student talk which was work related. The nature of such interaction was difficult to code accurately as it quite often occurred out of my range of hearing, and so I abandoned the separate categories that Brophy and Good employ here. In the Science classroom this interaction was initiated roughly equally by the teacher and the students. In Art students, especially Afro/Caribbean boys, appeared more likely to initiate the interaction (although note there was only one white girl in the Art group). In both classrooms private interaction of this sort was fairly evenly distributed between students of different ethnic and gender groups, but boys, especially Afro/Caribbean boys, received slightly more attention than the other groups. Both teachers appeared also to favour relatively low status students, who tended to initiate more interaction with them. These imbalances seemed, on the basis of classroom observation, to derive largely from the fact that boys, both Afro/Caribbean and white, were more likely to be behavioural problems in the classroom, and therefore attract and be given more attention in the hope that frequent attention would lessen their deviant activities. This explanation was supported by both teachers, one of whom complained bitterly about the way the boys, through their behaviour, monopolised his attention.

There were very few teacher/student question and answer or public discussion sessions in either Art or Science. Public interaction with individual students was mainly restricted to behavioural criticisms or warnings which nearly always followed student deviance of some sort. These interactions were therefore almost always student rather than teacher initiated and cannot be taken as valid measures of differential treatment springing independently from the teacher. In the Science lessons there appears to be a tendency for boys, especially Afro/Caribbean boys, and lower status students to receive more behavioural criticisms and warnings. This largely stemmed from the fact that in these lessons, which I have explained were taught by a probationary teacher, the boys were often badly behaved and difficult to control. In Art such interaction was more evenly distributed, with low status students not surprisingly picking up more behavioural warnings and criticism.

There is more data available from the English and Humanities classrooms. These teachers spent more of their time in public discussion and interaction with students. Both used the technique of getting students to read texts aloud to the class, although the English teacher asked for students to volunteer whereas the Humanities teacher selected students himself. The number of reading turns is therefore a better measure of differential treatment by the teacher in the Humanities classroom. Both teachers used question and answer sessions in order to test student knowledge and encourage participation. The Humanities teacher made most use of direct questions i.e. questions addressed specifically to a student by name, whereas the English teacher tended to use more open questions i.e. questions addressed to the whole class, who are encouraged to raise their hands if they wish to respond, whereupon the teacher chooses a student to answer. Direct questions are a better measure of differential treatment springing from the teacher as students do not influence teacher choice of respondent (24). It proved impossible to code which students raised their hands or otherwise offered to respond to open questions at the same time as coding question, answer and feedback. The number of students who answered open questions therefore takes no account of the number who offered to answer. The number of student initiated response opportunities were fairly low in both subjects, but higher in English where student statements, questions and call outs were more common. The amount of teacher feedback to students which involved praise or criticism was again very limited in both classrooms, and, as in Art and Science, private teacher/student interaction was mainly work related consisting of process and product feedback.

In English reading turns were fairly evenly distributed across ethnic, gender and status groups, but in Humanities there was a clear tendency for the teacher to favour the high status white girls. There was a similar pattern in the distribution of questions by these two teachers. The English teacher showed a slight tendency to favour boys, especially Afro/Caribbean boys, and lower status students by asking them more direct and open questions, although the latter were strongly influenced by the number of students offering to answer. However, the Humanities teacher appeared to favour white students, especially girls, and high status students in the distribution of his questions. As a result in the English classroom boys, especially Afro/Caribbean boys, and lower status students enjoyed a greater proportion of teacher initiated response opportunities, whereas in the Humanities classroom the

situation was almost exactly the reverse with white students, especially girls and high status students getting the greatest proportion of teacher initiated response opportunities. The pattern is repeated when we look at teacher feedbacks to students when they answer a question wrongly. In English the percentage of such answers which were followed by a repetition, rephrase of the question or a clue was similar for each gender, ethnic and status group. In Humanities there was again a tendency to favour the high status white girls by providing them with more opportunities to answer the question correctly. In terms of private interactions, however, this tendency was not apparent for the Humanities teacher who seemed to distribute his attention fairly equally. There seemed to be a slight tendency for the English teacher to initiate more private interaction with lower status students. In Humanities there was very little difference in student initiated response opportunities or private interaction between the groups. In English there was a tendency for boys, especially Afro/Caribbean boys, and lower status students to initiate questions, make unsolicited statements and call out answers to teacher questions, and to initiate more interactions with the teacher. In both classrooms there was a tendency for lower status students, and in Humanities Afro/Caribbean girls and in English Afro/Caribbean boys, to attract more behavioural criticisms and warnings.

In terms of reading turns, teacher questions and to some extent teacher feedback to student questions, then, there appeared to be a marked difference between these two teachers. The Humanities teacher tended to favour the white girls and high status students, the English teacher the Afro/Caribbean boys and lower status students. How can these differences be explained? One possibility could be the racial attitudes of the teachers involved. We have already seen how the English department had a very strong policy of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education and adopted positive strategies to incorporate the perspectives of ethnic minority groups into the curriculum. This could have resulted in a slight favouritism in the teacher towards Afro/Caribbean students. This does not however explain the imbalance in the Humanities teacher's approach. The Humanities department claimed also to have adopted a Multicultural approach, although as we have seen their views were less strong than their counterparts in the English department. Could it be that this Humanities teacher was operating on the basis of subtle, perhaps unexamined, racist views which biased his teaching? It is, of course, almost

impossible to answer such a question conclusively. The evidence available, however, does not support such an explanation.

First, over the course of a year's field work in the school I came to know the Humanities teachers fairly well. I conducted several interviews on a number of topics with this particular teacher. In informal conversations and interviews there was no evidence that any of the views he held were racist. Second, in other classes of his that I observed I noticed no differential treatment on racial lines.

What appears to explain the imbalance in his teaching of 3GH is a subtle combination of teaching strategy, classroom organisation and student response cues. The Humanities teacher liked to keep a fairly strong rein on the students in his class (see chapter 7). Through his 'formal' approach and tight classroom management he succeeded in creating a quiet and orderly classroom which was in stark contrast to many of the classes I observed at Milltown High. He was very concerned with 3GH, who he was aware could be 'a difficult class', that class discussions should not become disorderly and thus counter productive and so he tended to call on those students whom he felt were capable and willing to make 'sensible' and fairly immediate contributions to class discussion. To have chosen others could have meant delay or distractions and increased the likelihood of disorder. Thus he tended to call upon certain high status students who were relatively 'bright' and 'willing to answer' - mainly the white girls - Susan, Kate, Alex and Julie, and Alan, a white boy, and Martin, an Afro/Caribbean boy. This then was one reason for the imbalance in public interaction. The fact that Nancy, the Afro/Caribbean girl, who was the most highly perceived student in the class was absent for 6 of the 10 Humanities lessons I observed may be another. The figures were adjusted for attendance, but she was considered to be rather reticent and unfamiliar with the subject matter because of her long absence and therefore was given few response opportunities.

A third possible reason for the imbalance was the way the students sat themselves in the classroom and the position the teacher took relative to this for most public interaction. Closest to the teacher on his right were the three white girls - Susan, Kate and Alex. Immediately in front of the teacher three white boys - David, Alan and James, sat, with Martin (Afro/Caribbean) and John (white) (and Paul and Darren (white) when they were in, which was rare). Julie, the other well-perceived white girl and Nancy (Afro/Caribbean), when she was

present, sat at the back of this row. Furthest away from the teacher on his left and frequently outside his immediate field of vision sat most of the Afro/Caribbean students in the class. The proximity of the white students to the teacher, the fact that they could attract his attention more easily in class discussions, whereas the Afro/Caribbean students could more easily be ignored, and get themselves ignored if they wanted to, seemed to be a major factor in causing this interactional imbalance. Interestingly in private interactions when the teacher was moving around the classroom the imbalance in interaction disappears. Thus a combination of factors appears to have produced a pattern of public interaction which, whilst not based upon or justified by racist beliefs, tended to disadvantage Afro/Caribbean students.

Similar reasons perhaps also explain the imbalance in the English classroom in favour of boys and lower status students. The English teacher exercised less rigid classroom control and was more prepared to address her questions generally to the whole class. Boys, especially two or three vocal Afro/Caribbean boys, were frequent respondents, either because they specifically were chosen to answer or because they called out their answers. She also adopted the strategy of asking direct questions of a student for disciplinary reasons (25). Boys and lower status students were therefore more likely to be called on. Moreover, boys, and the Afro/Caribbean boys in particular, seated themselves in her classroom more centrally in her field of vision than did the girls. They were also much more dominant in private interaction, initiating more contacts with the teacher. Similarly they were more prominent in disciplinary incidents in the classroom. The English teacher complained, as did the Science and Art teachers, that they monopolised her time as a result. In short, they made themselves far more visible in the English classroom receiving more than their share of attention as a result. (c.f. Stanworth 1981, Spender 1982, French and French 1984)

Despite all this, however, if we return to the questions which I posed at the beginning of this section, on the whole it did not appear to be the case in this mixed ability class that differential treatment by teachers of students on the basis of status or ethnic group was common. Whilst in the classroom of one of the teachers high status, white students did seem to be favoured in the opportunities they received to take part in public teacher/student interaction, a system of sponsorship, in which highly perceived students are regularly singled out for preferential treatment and opportunities by their teachers, did

not appear to operate; and differential treatment did not appear to relate very much to students' ethnic group. On the whole the teachers, who eschewed favouritism, appeared to adopt a relatively egalitarian approach in the classroom for pragmatic as well as philosophical reasons. All students were expected to follow the same curriculum, common work tasks were set and in most of the classrooms teacher time and attention was fairly evenly distributed. Where imbalances in teacher/student interaction did occur they seemed to be caused by a complex of interrelated factors concerned with teacher and pupil classroom strategies and the ways these meshed together in the web of classroom interaction. It seems important to emphasise that the teacher is not the only person in the classroom responsible for the distribution of teacher time and attention. This can be strongly influenced by the action of students in the class and the strategies the teacher is forced to adopt in order to 'cope' in this situation (c.f. French and French 1984). Such influences appear to have been particularly strong in some of the classes at Milltown High. In several classes that I observed boys, both Afro/Caribbean and white, were more likely to present discipline problems than girls. They frequently dominated classroom discussions and initiated more contacts with the teacher. As a result teachers, in order to defuse potential threats to classroom order gave them more attention than the girls. Thus I am not arguing here that differential treatment did not occur. Clearly some individual students were treated differently from their peers and this did to some extent depend on the teachers' perceptions of that student. Some students did enjoy more positive interactions with their teachers. What I am claiming is that such differential treatment was not marked and not systematically related to the teacher's perception of student status, ethnic or gender group. Furthermore, the teacher's perception of the students was not the only factor involved in determining patterns of classroom interaction, student behaviour was also a highly significant factor.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that in-school practices and procedures which many authors have identified as working to the disadvantage of ethnic minority students in British schools did not do so at Milltown High. I have presented evidence from five main sources. First, on the basis of my own informal observation of the school and its procedures I argued that, with one or two minor exceptions amongst supply staff, there were no overt expressions of racism amongst the staff and no clear differential treatment of students on racial grounds. Moreover, the types of indirect discrimination identified by researchers such as Driver (1979) were also absent. On the basis of interview data, I then examined teachers' attitudes to students' racial and ethnic backgrounds, a subject of much concern and debate, and found that amongst the vast majority of the staff at Milltown High negative attitudes were not apparent. In fact for many staff the reverse was the case. Their attitudes to students' racial and ethnic backgrounds were generally positive. The majority of staff were also well aware of the danger of generalising about and stereotyping students on this basis. My third source of evidence was from the students themselves. I interviewed a number of students in the 1986/7 5th year about their views on the education they had received, the school, teachers and race relations in the school. Whilst a small number of these students spoke of racism in the school, their criticisms were generally reserved for an infamous ex-teacher, and few identified racism as a key area of concern. Many of them were extremely alienated, but this appeared to be mainly a result of their poor post-school prospects, their difficulties with much school work, what they saw as the inability of many teachers to 'handle them' and teach appropriately, and the decline in school activities brought on by the teachers' pay dispute. It did not appear to be the result of teacher racism or of racially based conflicts with white staff. Similarly relationships between students of the two main ethnic groups were not marked by conflict. In fact here, it seemed, was a school similar to the community described by Ward (1979) where race 'did not divide'.

I then moved on to an examination of the school's system of differentiating students and allocating them to different classes for teaching purposes. All students were taught a common curriculum in mixed ability groups until the end of the 3rd year. Differentiation had therefore been postponed

almost as long as possible at Milltown High. Students were not, as is the case in some schools, categorised and divided before having the opportunity to demonstrate their ability. When differentiation did occur block timetabling ensured that the system was fairly flexible. I explained how it was possible for students to be in different sets in different subjects and how many of the option groups were mixed ability. The inequalities of opportunity that appear to be produced by systems of streaming and banding, and the rigid polarisation of students into pro- and anti-school groups were therefore avoided. The process of formal differentiation when it occurred did appear to slightly disadvantage Afro/Caribbean boys who were less likely than might have been expected given their numbers in the school to be placed in 'top' groups and to advantage Afro/Caribbean girls. In the absence of 'objective' measures of ability it was difficult to say conclusively that Afro/Caribbean boys were more likely to be 'misallocated'. An examination of the procedures for allocating students to groups at the end of the 3rd year did reveal that ability was not the only criteria in use. Motivation, indicated by behaviour, was also a key factor. This in part derived from the view that motivation was an important characteristic for academic success in the top groups and also from the teachers' desire to avoid placing potentially disruptive students who might mar the academic ethos of the top groups. This may have worked to the disadvantage of Afro/Caribbean boys in particular as they as individuals were more likely to be seen as behavioural problems. Despite this it did not appear to be the case that the process of formal differentiation at Milltown High resulted in marked inequalities of opportunity on racial or ethnic lines.

In my case study of one mixed ability class although the teachers did differentiate the students on the extent to which they conformed to their notions of the 'ideal' student, such differentiation did not relate strongly to students' racial or ethnic background. Moreover, in several ways teachers attempted to conceal this social structure from the students. There was in fact little evidence of differential treatment of students on the basis of their status in the class hierarchy or their ethnic group. Where differential treatment on ethnic lines did occur this could be largely explained by the complex interrelationship of teacher and student classroom strategies. Unlike the mixed ability classes studied by Ball (1981), I did not find a marked system of 'sponsorship' of high status students in operation in this class. In fact here the mixed ability class appeared to produce a significant

equalisation of opportunities when compared to the banded system described by Ball.

So all-in-all I think we can conclude that the teachers at Milltown High had succeeded in creating a non-racist environment in the school. Racism did not influence social relationships and, on the whole, both Afro/Caribbean and white students enjoyed equitable treatment. This appeared to be reflected in the output of the school. If we take exam results as an, admittedly rather crude, indicator of the success rate of different groups, Afro/Caribbean students did as well as their white peers. In fact in the 1985/6 5th year Afro/Caribbean students, especially the girls, did significantly better (c.f. Driver 1980, Roberts et al. 1983) (see appendix 3).

Footnotes

- 1) This, of course, is her interpretation of events. I was unable to interview any of the students as they had all left by the time I arrived in the school. I have no reason though to doubt her story. See Dean and Whyte (1958) for a discussion of the means of verifying informant accounts, several of which I used here.
- 2) This was also one of the important principles behind the introduction of the Integrated Curriculum.
- 3) Hewitt (1986) makes a similar point in his description of youth culture in a multi-racial area.
- 4) However, mixed ability grouping is still relatively rare. an HMI survey in 1979 of 365 secondary schools found that only 34 schools had mixed ability grouping upto the 3rd year and some of these made special arrangements to withdraw students with 'serious learning difficulties' (DES 1979).
- 5) Though recently some Anti-Racists (for example Troyna 1987, Carter and Williams 1987) have begun to critically question the function of differentiation itself within the education system.
- 6) Although it could be argued that teachers in these studies were perhaps recognising the importance of student motivation (as indicated by behaviour), as well as ability, in determining achievement potential. There is a danger in criticising teachers on the basis of different evaluative criteria than they in fact used.
- 7) My analysis was based on the group who entered their fourth year in September 1985. There were 103 students in the year.
- 8) Unlike, for example, the clearly demarcated Newsom group in the school studied by Burgess (1983).

- 9) Ball (1981) noted a similar practice when Beachside comprehensive adopted mixed ability grouping.
- 10) This is, of course, assuming that experience is synonymous with effectiveness.
- 11) The vast majority of the students from both main ethnic groups had parents who were in manual occupations or who were unemployed. Of the sample of 31 5th year students that I interviewed only one white girl had parents in a middle class occupation, and to my knowledge she was the only middle class student in the year. The social class of students in this sense was constant.
- 12) I am assuming here that factors relevant to group allocation are equally distributed amongst the various ethnic/gender groups.
- 13) This was not the meeting to select the 4th year group described above, but I was informed that it was roughly the same.
- 14) During the meeting it was decided that this group would not be referred to as the 'top' group, but as the 'Lang/Lit' group.
- 15) I am describing here the system that operated for the students who became 4th years in September 1985. The system was changed somewhat in the following year. The number of options was reduced to two because of the extension of the core curriculum with a number of short course 'modules' that were part of the schools 'Alternative Curriculum Strategy'. The number of non-qualification courses in the option system was reduced in favour of courses which either led to O/C.S.E. qualifications or 'unit credits' from the local examining board. In this way it was hoped that a greater proportion of students would gain publicly acceptable qualifications and the distinction between students doing exam courses and those doing non-exam courses would be diminished. The emphasis on alternative forms of accreditation must also be seen as one method of increasing motivation for those students allocated to low status positions, a means of dealing with the consequent lack of interest and commitment - see Hopper 1971, Ball 1981.

16) I did not inform the teacher that I was interested in differentiation and differential treatment as if I had done they might have adjusted their behaviour. I told them I was interested in observing a typical class at the school. There was thus an element of deception here on my part.

17) This draws attention to the fact that interviews are social situations and thus what is revealed in such situations will depend on the subject's perceptions of that situation. It also raises the issue of whether it is possible to deduce a subject's 'real' perceptions from what they say in interviews (see Hammersley and Atkinson 1983), or indeed what is meant by 'real'.

18) The one exception here was in Maths where one student attended a 'remedial' Maths class. It is also worth noting here that the Maths teacher very much regarded this lack of differentiation as a problem. The Maths department had been persuaded by David Benyon to introduce mixed ability teaching in the 3rd year but had been unable to obtain what they regarded as appropriate resources. They operated a temporary system of class based teaching employing the resources previously used in their 3rd year sets.

19) Some of the students themselves were of course fairly able differentiators and were able to work out their relative academic standing in the group by listening to the oral contributions and examining the written work of their peers, but teachers did not encourage this.

20) See Hargreaves, Hester and Mellor 1975 for an analysis of classroom rules and the processes of deviance imputation.

21) It would have been regarded as inconceivable that a student who was regarded as 'not very able' should be publically singled out like this.

22) Perhaps one reason for this relative absence of differential treatment when compared the mixed ability classes of Beachside Comprehensive described by Ball (1981) was the lack of pressure on teachers from parents and the headteacher at Milltown High to produce good examination results. Ball argues that at Beachside the continued emphasis on exam results after the

introduction of mixed ability grouping made teachers more conscious of the need to 'push' the more able students. They were thus encouraged to single them out and give them extra attention and different work. This was not the case at Milltown High.

23) See A. Hargreaves (1979) for an example of this strategy of 'confrontation avoidance' and its implications for one student in the class he studied.

24) Although of course there may be certain subtle cues that students can use to attract or discourage the teacher's choice such as the use or non-use of eye contact or their seating position in the classroom. In some cases also direct questions were used by the teacher as disciplinary devices in order to attract student attention or divert them from some deviant act. The Brophy and Good system allows for the separate coding of such questions, but this relies very much on the observer inferring teacher intentions from observable behaviour. I decided that this was not possible to do accurately and so I coded all such questions as direct questions.

25) Although, for reasons I have explained, it was difficult to estimate the exact number of this type of question.

Chapter Nine

The Inner City School and the Problem of Teacher 'Survival'

Introduction

There was very little evidence that ethnic minority students were disadvantaged by the internal practices and procedures of Milltown High School. They enjoyed equal opportunities with their white classmates and racism did not appear to pattern relationships between teachers and students or students and students. I concluded in the last chapter that the teachers at Milltown High had succeeded in creating a non-racist environment in which students enjoyed equitable treatment irrespective of their ethnic background. Indeed, several of the teachers commented to me that they felt the school provided in this respect something of a safe haven in comparison with the institutions of the wider society. They argued that some of the students would regrettably suffer something of a 'rude awakening' when they left the school and entered the labour market.

But, of course, Milltown High is not a school in isolation, it is part of a wider educational system which is still, especially at secondary school level, to a large extent selective and class biased (Halsey 1978, Halsey, Heath and Ridge 1980, Ford 1969, Ball 1981, Heath 1987). Despite the rhetoric of comprehensive education students from different social backgrounds tend to enter different educational institutions at the age of 11, if they have not done so earlier. Selection now depends directly or indirectly on the possession of economic resources. Those who have such resources can secure places for their children in independent schools, or houses in suburban areas served by 'better' schools. Milltown's educational system is essentially of this type. For the 11 to 16 age group it consists of a small number of well-known, established independent and ex-direct grant schools, a number of voluntary aided, 'Church' (one Church of England, one Jewish and several Catholic) schools, and 'County', local, neighbourhood comprehensive schools. A substantial proportion of Milltown's middle class population send their children to independent schools either in the city or its surrounding area or, if they live in the small middle class enclaves of the city, to the local comprehensive schools of, in the words of an ex-Secretary of State for Education, 'proven worth'. In fact it has become common for middle class families to move house into these suburban enclaves or into neighbouring, more suburban L.E.A.s in order to ensure a place for their child at a 'better' comprehensive school. Non-Catholic working class children generally find themselves in neighbourhood

comprehensive schools. Social background therefore is a fairly powerful factor determining educational routes through the city's school system, and the social backgrounds of students entering secondary schools in Milltown are far from heterogeneous. The intake of Milltown High school was predominantly from the inner city and was therefore almost completely working class. In fact many of its students were drawn from what some authors have referred to as an 'underclass' (Rex and Tomlinson 1979, Glasgow 1981) - a social group who do not enjoy the advantages of the established working class, but who suffer high levels of unemployment, job insecurity, poverty and poor housing.

On a number of occasions during my field work it became starkly obvious to me that the educational experiences that many students received at Milltown High were very different from those that they would be likely to receive in certain other sectors of the local educational system. I am not in a position to present a systematic comparison of the educational provision or effectiveness of different schools in Milltown (c.f. Rutter et al. 1979, Mortimore et al. 1988). My study was basically an ethnographic case study of one school. However, during my work I gathered a certain amount of data, mainly from interviews and informal conversations with staff, which supported my view that there was a difference in the quality of education experienced by students at Milltown High. I believe that my argument and the data I present sheds light on the way the educational system contributes to the reproduction of racial (and class) inequality and provides an avenue for future research into this complex issue.

I want to emphasise here that I am not setting out to criticise the teaching staff or individual teachers at Milltown High. I would, in a sense, be pleased if I could do that because it would mean that the educational problems faced by the students could be put right if their teachers only pulled their socks up and performed their jobs properly. Alas things are not so simple. In fact many of the teachers at Milltown High, as we have seen, were hard working and committed to the education of students in the school. What I will argue is that many of them were caught up in a vicious spiral which resulted in declining morale and low expectations and the consequent impoverishment of the educational experiences of many of their students, a substantial proportion of whom were from ethnic minority backgrounds.

In several respects many of the teachers at Milltown High developed similar work and career perspectives to the Chicago teachers described by Howard Becker in 1952. He argued that for many teachers 'horizontal' (movement to alternative jobs at the same status and salary level) rather than 'vertical' career mobility (movement to jobs at a higher status and salary level) was important. Teachers, originally allocated to positions in 'slum' schools catering for 'lower class' and black students, often sought 'easier' work at the same level of the job hierarchy in 'good' schools in middle or upper class areas, rather than seek promotion in 'slum' schools. A minority of teachers, however, remained for some reason or another in the 'slum' schools. Here they were forced to 'adjust to the particular work situation' (see also Becker 1964). This involved first 'learning new teaching and disciplinary techniques which enable her to deal adequately with 'slum' children', second learning 'to revise her expectations with regard to the amount of material she can teach' and 'to be satisfied with a smaller accomplishment', and third finding 'for herself explanations for the actions of the children which she has previously found revolting and immoral' which 'allow her to 'understand' the behaviour of the children as human' (Becker 1952a). Becker also argued (1952b) that teachers generally orientate their perspectives, their view of how the job of teaching ought to be performed, around an image of the 'ideal client', and in a highly stratified urban society there will be 'many groups whose life-style and culture produce children who do not meet the standards of this image'. These children, who largely attend 'slum' schools, he suggests, will present the greatest problems for teachers in terms of teaching itself, classroom discipline and 'moral acceptability'. The adjustments that their teachers are forced to make in order to deal with these problems have strong implications for the educational opportunities made available to such students.

The data that I collected led me to conclude that similar processes occurred in the educational system of Milltown and at Milltown High School, and these had similar implications for the educational opportunities of the students in that school.

Staffing problems at Milltown High

As with Becker's teachers the idea of 'horizontal' mobility had become more important to many teachers in Milltown in recent years as the school system contracted because of falling rolls and the opportunities for 'vertical' mobility lessened. Many teachers also operated with similar preferences regarding jobs in the various schools in the city to those described by Becker. The teacher 'grapevine' provided them with the knowledge of which schools would be 'easy' and rewarding to work in and which would be more 'difficult' and potentially unrewarding. Such knowledge was influential in decisions about which school to apply to teach in and in patterning expectations of the nature of the work situation in a chosen or allocated school. Thus some teachers in Milltown would not even consider applying for a job at Milltown High. As one such teacher told me:

I wouldn't touch a job there with a barge pole. I just couldn't stand the hassle. Even if a scale 4 came up I'd rather stay where I am on a 2 and enjoy a little bit of job satisfaction.

(Teacher in a suburban comprehensive school)

Others, like Alan Moore, the Humanities teacher, were prepared to accept posts rather reluctantly for a short periods at the school in return for higher scales which they hoped would lead to 'better things'.

These preferences were revealed most clearly when Milltown reorganised its county secondary sector in 1982, scrapped school sixth forms creating sixth form colleges, and reduced the number of comprehensive schools. In order to ensure a fair distribution of teaching posts the L.E.A. adopted what was called an 'all out - all in' system in which all teachers 'lost' their current jobs, but were guaranteed a job somewhere in the city and were free to apply for any job in any school or sixth form college. This provided a great opportunity for horizontal mobility for many, a move to an 'easier', more rewarding school. Jobs in the colleges and the 'better' schools proved by far the most popular attracting large numbers of applicants. A number of 'good', well qualified teachers left Milltown High (1). Their places were, however, difficult to fill as jobs at Milltown High and other similar inner city schools attracted few applicants. For some jobs extra incentives, such as scale points, had to be

provided and sometimes the local inspectorate, whose job it was to staff the schools, were forced to employ subtle pressures to persuade teachers to go to such schools. Thus a number of staff came to or stayed at Milltown High reluctantly and lacked full commitment to the school.

The school had experienced similar, though less severe, problems over staffing since the 1982 reorganisation. Eighteen months after the reorganisation the head appointed at this time resigned. He explained in an interview with me that he had felt increasingly under pressure as he was expected to support staff, who were finding it very difficult to cope in the school, without the appropriate resources and support from the L.E.A.. Many staff experienced 'discipline problems' which they expected him to deal with in an 'authoritarian way'. This, he explained, was at variance with his personal philosophy which emphasised 'co-operation and relationships'. The mounting pressure forced him to leave.

The new head, David Benyon, felt he had been lucky since his arrival in the school as most of the jobs that had become vacant he had been able to fill with what he regarded as good candidates, and no jobs had remained vacant for long. But when a job was advertised the number of applicants was usually small and the choice therefore was limited. The position of Head of Music, for example, became vacant in June 1985. A local teacher was appointed temporarily for September whilst the job was advertised, but there was only one applicant, the incumbent temporary teacher, who was automatically appointed. Staffing the school therefore was not always easy. Suitably qualified and committed teachers were sometimes difficult to find.

Having said this there were, as we have seen, in some departments enthusiastic and committed teachers who chose to come to the school. Moreover, the school did not suffer from a high turnover of teachers as it apparently had done in times of relative teacher shortage in the mid-1970s. The contraction in teaching posts in the L.E.A. and nationally meant that the opportunities for mobility, both vertical and horizontal, were limited following the reorganisation. This, however, was something of a mixed blessing. It gave the school some stability, but at the same time it meant that some teachers who wanted horizontal moves and whose commitment to the school was weak were forced to stay.

In the year of my field work, however, by far the biggest staffing problem faced by the school was that of supply teachers. The teachers' industrial

action meant that permanent teachers in the school refused to 'cover' lessons when their colleagues were off sick. Because of the stresses and strains involved in working at Milltown High (see below) the school did suffer a rather high rate of staff absence. Thus the need for supply teachers was urgent. If an appropriate supply teacher could not be found then classes simply had to be sent home. The preference of the limited number of supply teachers available for work in the 'easier', 'better' schools meant that Milltown High frequently could not obtain enough teachers to cover all the classes of absent teachers. Thus many classes were sent home or in reality out of the school to wander the local area. In the absence of appropriate L.E.A. provision of supply teachers schools like Milltown High were hurt far more severely by the teacher industrial action than those in more suburban areas (2). In fact this situation prompted one of the senior members of staff to make the comments quoted in chapter 5 that the educational system offered a 'less than adequate education to a large proportion of the black population in Milltown'.

The problem of teacher 'survival'.

Many of the teachers that I talked to, especially those who had not taught before in similar schools, described their initial classroom experiences at Milltown High as a 'baptism of fire' or a 'culture shock' (c.f. Grace 1978, Cole 1984). In interviews with me they frequently described their early experiences and feelings. The following two quotations provide vivid examples.

When I came I couldn't believe the difference. Because I'd taught in a number of other schools and in all those schools I loved teaching.... And then I came to Milltown High and I just couldn't believe the difference. The first thing I found was the childrens' behaviour towards each other and how they talked to each other...The second thing was their lack of respect...for teachers. I could not get over the cheek and the rudeness. and I couldn't get over the fact that I couldn't get a class to sit down and listen and do as they were told....That first year was very hard...I had all sorts of problems because I didn't know how to cope with these sorts of children...They'd get up to all sorts of tricks like when I wasn't looking taking things out of the cupboard...I had my purse pinched...Things used to be thrown out of the window, and I wasn't aware of these things going on around me until somebody said did you know there's half a dozen pairs of scissors down there...Because I'd never been in an environment like this it never occurred to me that this could go on....After two weeks I had a real fight in the class, blood flying everywhere...I felt absolutely helpless...And the other children were standing around not sort of aiding and abetting, but they were certainly entertained by the whole thing. I had to send for someone in the end. That was very stressful. Having got over that within days I had another horrible incident where a boy just went up to a girl and stabbed her with a pair of scissors. And I thought 'what on earth have I come to'...And I found it impossible to cope with 20 children demanding your attention at the same time and getting really nasty and stroppy if you didn't, you know, drop everything and see to them...I'd always taught in an environment where they stood around and watched you and you could talk to them and explain what you were doing and why you were doing it. Not so here. They wouldn't stop talking long enough for you to be able to explain anything, with the result that you'd

come out at the end of the lesson thinking 'what have I done? I've done absolutely nothing. And what have they learnt? They haven't learnt anything because they haven't been quiet enough'.

(Home Economics teacher)

My first experiences were very frightening in a way because I hadn't worked in a school like this before....so I was quite frightened. In fact I was quaking in my shoes. And they were very aggressive at times...They didn't want to listen to me, they ignored me. They'd say, 'you're just another teacher, you're not going to stay 5 minutes'. It was all that business, because they really did feel let down by all the teachers they'd had. And unfortunately the teacher had been off ill (that I replaced) and she was this 'marvellous teacher', who in fact really wasn't from what I can gather from the staff, but to them she was this marvellous woman who let them do whatever they wanted, and there was me trying to make them work. I suffered from all that, and I would try to talk to them and they would just keep talking, I couldn't make myself heard, I couldn't teach a lesson, but having said that it was almost a ritual to go through because everyone I spoke to would say the same thing....I used to have a 2nd year English class...and I used to prepare lots of work and everything. I'd be really anxious, and they'd walk in and somebody would step all over the desks and then they'd open all the windows and hang out of the windows. And I'd be saying right come on let's start the lesson now, and they'd be shouting across the room at each other just totally ignoring me. And then there were two girls in the class and one of them was a bit odd, a bit peculiar I think, and she would start shouting just for the sake of it. So there was pandemonium. Eventually, you know, I might be able to get them to listen to me for 5 minutes and I'd blurt out what I wanted them to do, and then I'd spend the rest of the lesson literally running around the room chasing somebody, getting them to sit down, or else sending somebody out and they'd refuse to go out, or else they'd hang out of the window and then somebody would get the books off the desk and throw them out of the window. And that happened almost every lesson. I had them 4 times a week and it was absolute sheer hell. They just would not cooperate. And if I put work on the board, boring copying work, I might get them to sit down for

10 minutes to do that and then once they had done that, that was it, they were just terrible.

(English teacher)

Such experiences appear to have been particularly common for the staff who came new to the school following the reorganisation of 1982. A number of established teachers, noted for their 'good discipline', left the school as did the headteacher. Within only a few weeks, or even days in some cases, the new staff had to get to know each other, the new courses they were to teach and the new school with many different practices and procedures. Many of the students apparently felt betrayed by the disappearance of their familiar teachers, and others made the most of exploiting the difficult situation for their own amusement. The weeks following the reorganisation were particularly fraught for the new staff struggling to establish themselves as the following comments from a new, but experienced, Science teacher illustrate.

The weeks after reorganisation were horrific...The major thing was the discipline in the classroom. For a week or so it seemed no different, but very soon, whereas at (the last school he taught at) I could shout the kids down and get quiet for long enough to say what I wanted to say and launch them on the prac. or whatever, and be able to stop them once or twice a lesson if I wanted to, and certainly wind up at the end with a bit of peace and quiet, here I couldn't do that, especially with the top classes, the so-called better groups. I couldn't get them after a couple of lessons to shut up long enough, and as soon as I got them quiet and started to talk, somebody would fall off their chair laughing and poke someone else, and almost act as if I wasn't there, but it was just as if I wasn't there...I'd send a kid out and go out to talk to them on the corridor and try to knock them back into some kind of shape so that they can come back into the room, but they'd just go dumb, they'd refuse to answer anything, or they'd have a right stand up argument with you on whatever you said. It's really like meeting a very able adult who's argued all their life...I found that really destroying...Oh and the lying. Children lying all the time....I had this 4th year Chemistry group...about 20 came in usually...and I was using the resources that I used at (previous school). I'd had them printed and I'd brought copies with me. They're quite good, I

had them well sorted out, and the kids here used a lot of paper resources, so although they weren't the same, they were the same kind of things...And a lot of its prac., so you have a bit of a chat and then they do the prac. and then you get them back together and have a chat and say 'Oh what did you discover?' and then they write a conclusion about it. I just...some kids would throw stuff about when I wasn't looking, some would throw stuff about when I was looking, the noise level was very high. When I got them around this table at the end to talk about what they had done I could never get silence long enough to have any proper discussion...And that was frustrating because there were enough clever kids in the class.

Even experienced teachers who had taught for a number of years in other working class comprehensive schools in Milltown and elsewhere frequently had similar stories to tell about their initial experiences at Milltown High. Some were perhaps not as extreme as those I have quoted, but nevertheless the first few months of a teacher's career at the school were often cited as some of the most difficult they had had.

That such experiences were not uncommon was reinforced by my own observations in the classrooms of new teachers and sometimes of established teachers, and more generally around the school. My field notes are littered with descriptions of incidents in and out of lessons in which students challenged teachers' authority and disrupted the lessons that teachers had planned by boisterous and difficult, sometimes hostile and aggressive behaviour (See the chapter on the English department for some examples). In fact many classrooms at Milltown High vividly illustrated the basic conflictual nature of much classroom life (see Waller 1932).

Of course not all lessons were as fraught as the ones described by the teachers above. Some were calm, uneventful and seemingly cooperative affairs. Particular individuals, groups or classes of children were more difficult than others, and particular times - of the day, week, term or teacher's career - were more difficult. As Denscombe (1985) points out classroom interaction can be likened to a situation of 'guerilla warfare' where 'opposition to the ruling regime is localised and sporadic, rarely erupting into a wholesale challenge to the rule of the dominant party. For much of the time there is a fragile truce' (p97). But for the majority of teachers, even the most experienced and committed, classroom control was never easy to establish, and was frequently

contested by a number of students. Many of the classes, unlike the mixed ability classes described by Stephen Ball (1981) at Beachside, were not dominated by pro-school students, but by a significant number of poorly motivated, hostile and anti-school students. Such students (who were both Afro/Caribbean and white), were generally in the minority, but in terms of academic and behavioural norms in the classroom, they were often an influential minority. A larger number of students often displayed rather ambivalent attitudes to their schooling - they were neither strongly committed nor vehemently against - but were often prepared to go along with the behaviour of those who were anti-school.

The source of such student behaviour is, of course, highly complex. To some extent the social organisation of the school itself, which differentially allocates power, status, rights and territory to teachers and students, offering prestige and rewards to some students whilst rejecting others, encourages such resistance. And, as Waller (1932) notes, conflict is almost written into the nature of the teacher/student relationship because of the different interests and desires of the two parties. The extension of childhood into 'adolescence', and the lengthening of the years of compulsory schooling combined with the development of general adolescent culture, also clearly play a part. But particularly significant at Milltown High appears to have been the development of distinctive working class and ethnic youth sub-cultures in and around the school. These sub-cultures have complex roots in parental culture (see Pryce 1979), the social and economic position of working class and ethnic minority youth (see Cashmore and Troyna 1982, Cross and Smith 1987), and wider class and youth cultural forms (see Miller 1958, Hall and Jefferson 1976, Willis 1977). Their development has been given an added twist in recent years by mounting youth unemployment and declining economic opportunities in areas like Milltown.

Such sub-cultures have been most studied amongst boys. Willis (1977), in the rather different economic climate of the 1970s, described the sub-culture amongst a group of white working class boys he studied. They rejected school and the authority of their teachers, spent most of their time 'mucking about' and 'havin' a laugh', and celebrated toughness, aggression, verbal smartness and the masculinity of manual labour. Such a style, Willis argues, mirrored a wider working class culture, and was a means by which the boys expressed their own

collective identity. However ironically, its acceptance by the boys resulted in them moving into low status manual work.

Furlong (1984, 1985) provides a more recent analysis of a 'culture of resistance' amongst a group of Afro/Caribbean boys in a London comprehensive school which, he argues, resulted in the boys adopting a contradictory stance to their school life. On the one hand they accepted the need to get qualifications in order to 'get on', but on the other they spent much of their school time 'messaging about', socialising and 'establishing a reputation for being a man', flouting school rules and doing very little school work. Whilst there is clearly a possibility that this 'contradictory stance' was a product of the way Furlong gathered his data - attitudes stressing the importance of 'education and qualifications' are perhaps likely to be expressed by even anti-school students in an interview with someone who resembles a teacher - Furlong maintains that the sub-culture that the boys developed was influenced by a number of different, and sometimes conflicting, sources, which accounts for its contradictory elements. First, there were traditional male, working class, Caribbean cultural forms which emphasised 'intensive social interaction' amongst male peers, and the importance of establishing 'a reputation as a 'man'' through physical toughness and 'style'. Toughness and 'style' were expressed by the boys in their dress, their music and their non-conformist behaviour around school. Second, there was the influence of migrant parents who characteristically (Rex and Tomlinson 1979) appear to emphasise the importance of educational success in achieving upward mobility. Third, there was the relative academic failure of the boys which was, however, mediated by the structure and organisation of the liberal comprehensive school that the boys attended. Although the boys were not doing very well, and most of them knew it, Furlong argues that the full nature of their failure was hidden from them by the school's liberal policies of postponing and concealing differentiation, offering wide curriculum choice and relatively open entry to examinations (very similar to Milltown High).

In fact the attitudes and behaviour of a substantial number of male students, both Afro/Caribbean and white, at Milltown High, was similar to that described by Willis and Furlong. A number of girls also displayed behaviour which challenged school values and norms, but, as McRobbie (1978) observes in her study of working class girls, this was often expressed in less overtly aggressive and challenging ways (although this was not always the case - see

the description of girls behaviour in some of Alison Mitchell's lessons in chapter 6). Many students were not performing very well, compared to their peers at Milltown High and elsewhere, their peer group culture was often anti-academic, emphasising instead the values of physical toughness, verbal smartness, non-conformity, 'havin' a laugh' and 'style', and their post-school prospects were poor. This is not to say that all, or even the majority of students, at Milltown High were orientated to such sub-cultures. As in most schools there were a number of different student adapt^{at}ions to school life. But in many respects these anti-school orientations had become more dominant at Milltown High than in other schools with which I am familiar.

What is important for my argument is the effect that the attitudes and behaviour of such students had on the teachers at Milltown High and the quality of educational experience they were able to provide. As David Hargreaves (1975) notes the job of teaching contains two main sub-roles - the establishment of order and discipline in the classroom and the organisation of instruction and learning, the latter being almost impossible without the former. For several teachers at Milltown High classroom control was extremely difficult to establish and they were faced with a serious challenge to their conception of themselves as competent role performers. The result was what might be termed a 'survival threat' (Woods 1979, Pollard 1980, Riseborough 1985). By this I mean that their conception of themselves as competent practicing professional teachers and thus, given the importance of occupational identity in our society, their basic identity and self-esteem, was challenged and placed under threat. As Peter Woods points out, at risk was their 'physical, mental and nervous safety and well being', their professional identity, their status, self-esteem and way of life.

In order to 'survive', to avoid what Pollard (1980) terms 'personal and career bankruptcy', teachers, as with most other workers, must feel that they can perform their role adequately (or at least to an acceptable level of inadequacy) and that there is some degree of congruence between their conception of themselves and the nature of the role they are required to perform. Few teachers could continue for long believing that they were total failures and that their view of themselves was totally at variance with the type of work that they were expected to do. Of course definitions of 'adequacy' (or acceptable inadequacy) vary. An individual's definition is largely dependent on his/her conception of how the job ought to be done which is

derived from a number of background factors, the influence of training and socialisation into the occupational culture and, importantly, the work place. It is also dependent on the extent to which the individual is willing to make compromises between their conception of how the role ought to be ideally performed and how it actually can be performed in practical circumstances, what Pollard (1980) terms the 'ideal-self/pragmatic-self tension'. The level of acceptable incongruence between a teacher's conception of themselves and of their role performance will also vary for similar reasons.

Where their survival is threatened teachers must develop strategies which allow them to perform, or allow them to believe that they perform, their roles adequately, and to establish acceptable levels of congruence between their self-image and the nature of the role. These strategies often involve learning new teaching practices and techniques, redefining notions of 'adequacy' and redefining their own conceptions of themselves as teachers. It is these responses to 'survival threat' amongst the teachers at Milltown High that I want to describe now.

Responses to survival threat

1) Breakdown

A small minority of the teachers at Milltown High became what Riseborough terms 'sinkers'. They failed to 'survive' and sometimes suffered the pain of mental exhaustion or breakdown. Following school reorganisation, for example:

The guy that was in the department with me, John White, was a complete and utter disaster. He just couldn't stand it. He kept phoning in and saying he'd fallen off his motor bike and he'd lost all his stuff and he couldn't come. And he didn't arrive and if he did arrive he left early, and there were problems with his classes not being looked after and chaos even when he was there. He only lasted until Christmas. In the end he gave in. He was forced to give in his resignation.

(Humanities teacher)

During my field work two of the staff new to the school in the September suffered nervous breakdowns partly the result of the considerable stress they

faced during the first few months at Milltown High. As one of them later explained to me:

The illness was very definitely the result of the pressure here. I'm a worrier...I was starting to be pressured and pressured and pressured and getting ill without really realising it, until in the end it all got on top of me...So yes, no two ways about it the job was just too much...What finally happens is that you just cop out, you're just totally unable to cope any more.

Other staff came perilously close to giving up or suffering similar breakdowns:

It's a matter of coping with a tremendous amount of pressure and there were times when I did and times when I didn't. I can remember once in the middle of my first year when I spent most of my dinner time crying my eyes out in (deputy head's) office. Things were going on and I was under stress outside the school and I really was at the end of my tether and there were time when I just could not cope with all the stress, but in the end you've got to do it...

I know this sounds strange, but I think it's taken me until now (2nd year at the school) to cope, because my reaction to spending this first half term of hell, which it was although I was determined to beat it, was in the following half term I was off a lot with various illnesses...It took its toll of me health-wise and I just lost weight and after the Easter holidays I just went downhill, and although the lessons got a bit easier, the kids weren't quite as obnoxious...it was still an intolerable situation.

Others, whilst eventually surviving, went through what they often described as the most difficult periods in their teaching careers, experiencing considerable stress:

The first two weeks here I went home, sat on the sofa and vegetated. I couldn't bear the T.V. on, I wasn't eating, I wondered what on earth I'd done. I couldn't believe it. After coming from a school where you had to

shout at 1st years and they'd burst into tears, and that was because they weren't breathing in tune with everybody else, to come here and find that you were struggling to keep them in their seats or even in the room in some cases, and certainly silence was out of the question, and it still is to a large extent. The shock of all that was unbelievable. And I just thought, 'well this is stupid'. I didn't think of giving in or walking out for a while, but the first two weeks I was so shocked. I couldn't do anything. I dropped out of politics (he was a local party agent). All I did was to come here and go home and be shocked really. I couldn't believe that such places existed or that we as adults were tolerating it...the shock was incredible.

(Humanities Teacher)

As Riseborough (1985) vividly reminds us the working class school can be as much an institution that 'processes' teachers as it is one that 'processes' students. Indeed, as he argues, working class students can be powerful 'gatekeepers' in teachers' objective and moral careers.

2) Retreat

There were also some teachers who left the school, and in some cases teaching altogether, because they were unable or unwilling to make the adjustments required in order to survive at Milltown High (c.f. Woods 1981). Either they found the necessary strategies difficult to master effectively or they were unwilling to redefine their conceptions of adequacy or make the appropriate changes to their conception of themselves as teachers. One such teacher was Jane Gabriel whose practice I described in chapter 6. She came to the school as a relatively inexperienced teacher and saw herself as a radical, committed to 'progressive' educational ideals. During her initial year at Milltown High she experienced many of the difficulties I have described and found her view of teaching and the sort of teacher she wished to be under threat. She compromised to some degree by adopting survival strategies, but she was never satisfied with the way she was forced to work and with the changes in her personality that the school appeared to be forcing. After two years she decided to leave the school and seek a job in community education.

3) Adjusting to the inner city school

The majority of staff at Milltown High stayed and 'survived'. They could not leave teaching, their 'investment' (Woods 1979) in the job was too great, horizontal mobility was not often possible or in some cases was ideologically undesirable, and their personalities did not incline them to mental breakdown. They thus had to 'adjust to their situation' (Becker 1952a), adapt to the inner city school, and cope with its constraints in order to 'survive'. What adjustments did they make?

As the main threat was to their competence in maintaining classroom control the disciplinary rather than the educational aspect of their role (D.Hargreaves 1975) inevitably became the primary concern of many of the teachers at Milltown High. This concern was displayed in talk in the staffroom and in meetings where disciplinary problems were a common topic of discussion. In fact classroom control rather than education often became the central and overriding goal. Teachers' aims often became more orientated towards 'getting through the next lesson' without 'losing control', without a 'confrontation' or 'incident' and with the minimum of stress.

Most of the time it is just survival here, a matter of control, getting through each lesson or each day with the minimum of trouble. We don't think about actually teaching the kids very much.

(Science Teacher)

SB - I wouldn't move to another school like this. There are still schools that exist where there is more academic interest, where the children are better motivated, and there's a lot less hassle and therefore you've got more energy to put into doing other things, rather than just surviving each period at a time.

PF - What do you mean by survival?

SB - Well if you get through a lesson and the children do basically what you want them to do, without any hassle, any aggro. Well I mean that's an achievement here. You can't assume in the morning that everything's going to be like that. You hope that it will and in most cases, amazingly enough, it is, and if you can get that it's survival in a sense. I don't mean

survival where you just sit in a room and the kids run around you. That's not survival, it's capitulation.

(Humanities Teacher)

The creation of an ordered classroom environment is central to the self-esteem of most of the teachers. Their feelings of competence and the judgement of others as to their competence is largely based on their ability to maintain classroom order. To achieve it, and therefore 'survive' as a teacher, it was necessary to adapt and adjust to the reality of classroom life at Milltown High. This meant teachers were forced to learn new disciplinary strategies and to modify their established or preferred pedagogy. In fact the need to avoid classroom disorder by the use of disciplinary techniques became far more important than any pedagogic ideology (c.f. Denscombe 1980).

Peter Woods (1979) outlined 8 basic 'survival strategies' that he observed teachers using at the secondary modern school he studied which combined together, he argued, to form a 'hidden pedagogy of survival' (see also Denscombe (1985) for a similar discussion of classroom strategies) First was what he called 'socialisation' which involved the direct and indirect teaching to students of school standards, values and beliefs, and the appropriate notion of the 'good student', and the stripping of parts of the student's 'self' which is replaced by a form of corporate school identity (c.f. Goffman 1968). This, Woods argued, was not so much a strategy more an 'anticipatory manoeuvre'. Second was the strategy of 'domination' - the use of verbal aggression and physical force, punishments, threats, surveillance, policing (A. Hargreaves 1979), and 'showing them up' - in order to force students to conform. Third was 'negotiation' in which appeals, apologies, flattery, promises, bribes, exchanges, threats, and rewards are used in order to persuade and cajole students into conformity or some form of compromise or 'working consensus' (Pollard 1985). Fourth was 'fraternization' where teachers attempted to form 'good relationships' with students by getting to know them informally in the classroom and through extra-curricular activities, and sharing jokes, conversations and experiences with them. In short, reducing the social distance between themselves and their students in order to 'mellow the inherent conflict', 'increase pupil sense of obligation' and 'decrease the desire to cause trouble'. Denscombe (1985) prefers the term 'co-option strategy' which seems essentially similar to Wood's 'negotiation' and 'fraternization', but has certain

additional elements. He argues that teachers attempt to incorporate student opposition into the established system by encouraging student participation in lessons and in the running of schools, reasoning, adjusting curricula in order to make it more 'interesting and relevant' to students, and by adopting a strategy of 'friendliness'. The fifth strategy identified by Woods was 'absence or removal' and included unofficial and official teacher absences, getting rid of or unloading trouble makers, ignoring the truancy or absence of such students, developing out of school activities such as link courses, community work and trips, wasting time at the end of breaks, lunch hours and at the beginning and end of lessons, the avoidance of potentially troublesome situations and the vertical and horizontal career mobility of teachers. Sixth was the 'ritual and routine' by which teachers imposed a structure on the school and classrooms that 'pupils and teachers automatically accept'. Things like timetables, assemblies, classroom entry and exit routines, classwork work routines are all means by which teachers regulate and control school life. The seventh was termed 'occupational therapy' and characterised many of the tasks that teachers set students to do which were frequently aimed to occupy or keep students happy rather than actually teach them anything. It also, Woods maintained, characterised much teacher behaviour too. Again Denscombe's (1985) analysis is similar as he identifies 'classwork management strategies' as highly significant in teachers attempt to maintain classroom control. Finally Woods identified what he called 'morale boosting' which was a means of accounting for 'survival strategies' and involved the subtle ideological devices by which teachers convince themselves and their colleagues that what they are doing is 'education'.

I observed teachers using all the strategies that Woods and Denscombe describe. We have seen from an examination of the English and Humanities departments that teachers had to adopt firm 'classwork management strategies' in order to maintain classroom control. They controlled the content and pacing of student work and the ordering of classroom events, activities and interaction, and they were generally at the centre of class discussions and the focus of classroom interaction. The following extracts from interviews reveal the other types of strategies that many of the teachers adopted:

SW - ...my 1st year class haven't even mastered the fact that when they open their book they write the date in Spanish and the title and they

underline it, and therefore I have to go and tell each individual to do that, because if I tell the group they'll ignore me....I've got to concentrate on individuals all the time. I give general instructions and hope that two or three will follow them, then I have to go to each one and tell them what to do, because they're not listening properly.

PF - Do you find it difficult to teach them as a class and do language work with them?

SW - Yes very difficult indeed. We try to do a lot of oral work as well...which is how they learn the language, but it's a real uphill struggle.

PF - So what do you do?

SW - Well I tend...All our lessons have oral work first and then we get on to reading and writing. I always try to do some oral work. But if it breaks down I end up getting them to write it which is totally the wrong way to learn the language. They ought to be listening to it and speaking it first before they even see it. We do far too much written work.

(Languages Teacher)

HS - In the end I stopped having conclusions at the end of lessons. I launched the lessons and they did the prac., and I threw some kids out and every now and again if it got too noisy and too uncooperative and silly I'd stop it altogether and give them books out and they'd copy out of books, and when I'd finally got quiet I'd say, 'You know is this what you want?' and try the threatening thing, you know, 'If you don't do what I want, you know, it's a simple choice. You can either do the prac. or you can do this. Now you make up your mind!'...And that never worked either (laughs). Threatening them never worked. At (last school) I could threaten them and it would work, but...

PF - So what worked in the end?

HS - Nothing really. I think what happened over the two years I had them (A 4th year Chemistry group) was more and more kids wagged it...What I did at one point was...we had a circus of experiments with maybe 20 experiments on it. When they came in they just took one off the tray and just got on with it by themselves, so I never had to speak to them as a group ever, and I just walked around and talked to them a few at a time. And that worked very well. The trouble is it's an incredibly slow way of working, but the kids who were getting on with the Chemistry O.K. I could

spend more time with, and the kids who were still totally disruptive I threw out, and the ones who were learning nothing I just let learn nothing.

HS - I don't stand up at the front of the class and talk to classrooms full of kids anymore. I just don't do that at all...

PF - So what sort of methods work best with the kids?

HS - For a one off, for a peaceful life, a bit of comprehension. We've got some books called 'Reading about Science' with a very low reading age, really jolly books with lots of good Science good background information, and for an easy life give that out and they read it...and I write ten questions out on the board and it always starts off with 'Copy the first paragraph out', because that gives you five to ten minutes peace and quiet...Then 'Draw the diagram half way down the first side', and then half a dozen questions which the answers are really just re-writing a sentence, and then maybe a few harder ones at the end. I do that with 2nd years and I did it with 3rd years a lot....Another thing is a series of experiments where they are doing the same kind of thing. So once they have learned how to do it they do the same kind of thing again and again and again, but you know either getting more complicated or answering different questions. Like we have these circuit boards where the kids have light bulbs and batteries and bits of wire and you find out what happens you use more batteries or more bulbs....that works well, because once they have learnt the skill they can use it again and again and it's nice things to mess with. Micro-electronics for the same reason. You see a class with that now...it's all figuring things out, logic, solving problems. It's great Science, great education, and the kids love it.

PF - So does that get over the problem of control in another way?

HS - Yes I think it does because it does two things really. One is it improves the quality of learning, and the kids do actually feel they are working purposefully. They may not think that, but they experience a lesson which is a sensible lesson where they do something that is interesting and at the end they feel they have done something. In the most traditional sense they feel it's good education. Also you're not creating problems for yourself by talking to 20 bored kids, because once they get into that system you never have to...So it does, I think give them a good

education and it heads off all kinds of problems which chalk and talk create.

(Science Teacher)

The bulk of the time I can't teach the way I want to teach. I mean I ought to be doing far more teaching than I actually do. But so much of the time they won't listen or I can't get them together because they're all over the place. So I tend to try and work informally with individuals getting in the odd bit of teaching here and there, but a lot of the time it's just entertainment, we keep them amused.

(P.E. Teacher)

I was often in a real dilemma, because you think do I cop out and give them loads, reems and reems of copying and boring meaningless stuff, which you have to do sometimes, let's face it. Then sometimes I would try to do something interesting and they wouldn't listen or they'd make a mess of it...Sometimes I'd be so organised, ultra organised, spend the whole break getting everything set out, getting it all worked out in my mind how it will go and then it would all go wrong. But I thought a lot of that Social education stuff was a load of tripe anyway so I didn't use a lot of it...To be quite honest I lived from day to day...It was like 'well they were really rotten when I gave them something nice, so this week they're going to get a load of really boring writing', or else, 'I tried them last week and they were good so we'll do something a bit more adventurous.'

(Social Education Teacher)

RF - What you effectively do is to lower your standard by chopping off...You basically say we're going to do that experiment, so this is what you're going to do, you're going to get that, you're going to get your bunsen, and put that on your bunsen, you're going to put water in there, you're going to heat it, measure the temperature. Now half of them might have understood that, the other half you have to tell again as you go along.

PF - So you make the instructions as simple as possible?

RF - Yes, they're basically cooking, they're not doing Science.

(Science Teacher)

Well I tried all sorts of things. I've tried the dictatorial approach, because that had worked in the past and once you've established yourself well then you can ease up. So I tried that, and then with some I tried the more softly-softly approach, you know trying to get to know them, taking an interest in them, hoping that they would start to trust me. But now I suppose I'm somewhere in the middle. But it took me a couple of years to establish that to find out what works. At the end of the first year I felt it was a total waste of time and I felt that I was never going to get anywhere. But with regard to coping with it now I can cope with it if I'm consistent, I say what I mean, and I don't go back on it one way or the other. And by the time you get into your 4th year most of them realise that you mean what you say and you have got a sort of presence.

(Home Economics Teacher)

I think you have just got to persevere...In my first year I was always keeping kids in, giving lines, talking one-to-one for ages and ages which is very tiring when you're tired already because of the stress...I believed in the end it would pay off and it has. I still do detentions, etc. especially with a new class. I have a blue book in which I monitor everything. I write down what they've done wrong with the dates and the times and who I've seen and what I've done. It's very important to keep on top of everything. I mark their books at least once a week, I talk to the kids about their work when I've marked it. They know that they can't scribble all over their books because they know that I'll do something about it. If they do something wrong they know I'll chase them up on it, and keep them in....I don't let anything go. There are lots of examples here of things being ignored, for example you have a bit of a do with a kid and they say, 'Oh fuck off', and people ignore it. Well I don't and my hearing is too good for my own benefit sometimes...If a kid answers me back I'm ready for throttling them and I won't let them get away with it without me really going on about it, and in the end I think that works. They know they're going to cop it if they're unpleasant, idle or not doing their best.

(Humanities Teacher)

PF - What sort of strategies would you say you used in the classroom with the kids?

JP - Playing things down, not reacting, keeping cool, even when you're burning inside to explode, don't. And that's what's so tiring. I come home and take it out on my own kids...Not to rise to the bait, not to interpret everything as aggression... often it's just playfulness, not aggression at all...To respect the kids making them feel that they have an important part to play...They like to feel that they are special to you as an individual. It's very important to give them individual attention and get them involved, bring them into conversations, talk about their experiences, care about them, their interests and their needs.

PF - Do you find that building up relationships with them helps in the classroom?

JP - Yes they like to work for me. I also try to get to know their social workers. If they realise you're one of a network of people working together and that what is said and done won't be ignored, part of the network of people trying to help them out, then that helps....You also have to cajole a lot, you have to negotiate and bargain with them and they're extremely skilled negotiations most of them. They're good campaigners. They'll probably leave school being able to fight for what they want, but without the results unfortunately....You have to put up with a lot and try not to rise to their provocation...If you follow everything through you could spend half an hour and just drive yourself round the bend trying to make one kid take his jacket off. So you have to adapt the rules...And you can't really say if you do this you're going to get such and such a job, because the jobs aren't there anymore. So you have to make the experience itself as exciting as possible...you have to make the experience inherently interesting.

(Integrated Curriculum teacher)

Many teachers then in order to 'survive' at Milltown High were forced to adjust their teaching methods and the way they organised classroom work. Several teachers felt that certain important aspects of their subject pedagogy - the oral work in Languages, the class discussions and end of lesson summaries in Science, the coaching in P.E., the group practical work in Humanities, the discussion work in English - frequently had to be restricted or abandoned altogether. They were forced to adjust their notions of adequate teaching to cope with the practical constraints of the school. Reluctantly they

were often forced to put what Woods calls 'occupational therapy' in their place - 'boring copying', simple comprehension exercises and written exercises, drawing, game playing, television programmes, walks in the park, 'cooking rather than Science' - activities which 'keep them occupied', 'get their heads down', or 'keep them quiet' and thus avoided disruption and gave the maximum chance of maintaining classroom control.

On the other hand some teachers were also given a strong incentive to search for new, more interesting and 'relevant' teaching techniques and materials (see the comments of the Science teacher above). These aided their attempts to maintain control by increasing the entertainment value of their teaching and involving students in classroom activities thus 'motivating the unmotivated' (Denscombe 1985). Thus it is important to note that the 'survival' problems of the inner city school may in some senses have positive spin offs. This also perhaps explains the apparent contradiction that teachers in many inner city and working class schools are often highly receptive to innovations, but at the same time rather conservative in classroom orientation, a contradiction that was certainly evident at Milltown High.

The strategies employed by teachers did vary according to a number of factors - the ideological disposition of the individual teacher, the nature of their contact with the students which primarily depended on their subject, the teacher's sex, and the nature of the particular class and students, were all influential. For some 'domination strategies' were the most effective, others preferred 'negotiations' with their eventual compromises, and others put their energies into 'developing relationships'. Of particular importance was the teacher's educational ideology. For example, the progressively orientated Integrated Curriculum and English teachers tended to adopt strategies such as negotiation, fraternization, developing relationships and introducing 'more relevant' curriculum and 'more active' teaching techniques, although, as we have seen, the latter were often difficult to implement. In fact 'progressivism', as with most educational ideologies, contains survival strategies as it includes recipes for enhancing classroom control and teacher competence in difficult circumstances. On the other hand the more pragmatic teachers of the Humanities department were more likely to employ a combination of classroom management and domination strategies. They relied more heavily on efficient classroom organisation, 'occupational therapy', close supervision and surveillance, and frequent threats of punitive action. None of the teachers in the school relied

totally on domination strategies. The strict teacher 'ruling with a rod of iron' seemed to be a thing of the past at Milltown High. Both staff and students would not have regarded the behaviour associated with this style as legitimate.

As well as modifying their teaching methods and learning new disciplinary techniques many teachers explained that another strategy they adopted was to lower their expectations of the amount of academic work the students could get through and of the standards of that work. Essentially they modified their definitions of the type of work they felt was adequate for the students.

HS - I think what I did with them was I expected much less. They still did the practical, they still did the experiments and filling in the charts and having the discovery bit, but the theory lessons or trying to explain and more to the point getting them to try and explain was just finished. And something I've said to the others in departmental meetings or when we have a cup of coffee, all I think we can do in the short term is that we can have lessons where the kids work more or less purposefully, and I don't care what they do in lessons, if they work purposefully for most of the lesson and most of the kids do it, then that's better than what has generally happened. You know that has got to be the first priority, we get back to a system where in most of the lessons kids are doing what you want. If that means scrapping everything, we scrap everything. If it means only doing the easy things then we only do the easy things, and if it means having some lessons where they copy out of books, they copy out of books. It doesn't matter what they do....

PF - Are control and containment the biggest problems here?

HS - Attainment as a goal for most of the kids for most of the time, I think, has gone. The only strategy is containment. At one time if a kid had done nothing in a lesson I think I would have done something about it. I mean I don't think I would have been that red hot, but now if a kid did nothing and he didn't annoy me I would consider that pretty O.K. So in a way we've let standards go I think.

(Science Teacher)

Dealing with the disciplinary things really grinds you down. You're sometimes left with only half an hour or twenty minutes (out of fifty) of a lesson left to actually get through the lesson you had planned. You quite

often wouldn't get through what you had hoped to because of the time taken to settle down and get started...In the end you have to accept that you will get through less in a lesson than you expected. I often only got through half what I intended, and you often end up expecting less of the children here, which leads to more stress. The feeling that you're not getting through what you should do and yet you start perhaps planning to get through less and you're expectations start slipping. You can't help it...as the term grinds on and you're wound down further and further. I do think you come to expect less of the kids.

(Languages Teacher)

EA - I accept far lower standards here than I ever used to because in a way you're thinking if I give them a 'good' that's encouraging them, you know and they'll come back and do some more for me. It's almost as if you're buying them, winning them over.

PF - Do you have to do that in order to cope?

EA - Yes I have to...A few occasions when I've done what I used to do in my other school, you know, tear a strip off somebody and tell them what I thought of them...whereas now I reason all the time, or else ignore, loads of ignoring. I mean my God, you ignore so much, and the positive things, you just home in on them as much as you can do and say 'Oh marvellous, this is lovely work'. Really it's lovely for them, it's lovely in comparison with what they did two weeks ago. But I don't know if that's fair...We do tend to have low expectations here because, in a sense, we're grateful if they do anything, if they finish a piece of work off or something. We do that because we're having to cope with difficult children in the classroom by ourselves.

(English/Social Education Teacher)

Teacher expectations are different here because of the numbers dropping so much, and because maybe you don't get the top strata of the bright kids. Therefore everything gets geared lower. And also it's hard because there are quite a lot of discipline problems so it's hard to keep in contact with those kids who are actually bright and can achieve, because they tend to just cruise along and never stretch themselves, because they never have to, or because they're never made to because there are other things to be

looked at. I think mainly it's to do with discipline. A lot of your time in the classroom you're thinking, 'I hope nothing goes wrong', you know, 'I've got the kids in here, let's keep control for as long as possible and hopefully nothing will go wrong, or there will be no disturbances', rather than thinking, 'how much can these kids actually achieve'. I mean it's not all the time, and perhaps people who have got smaller groups can concentrate on that area more...But I think most teachers here would agree that hopefully you want a good lesson where nothing goes wrong and that's your primary concern, because it happens such a lot in this school, you know your lessons being disturbed, incidents happening or incidents from other classes coming into your class.

(Drama Teacher)

Although the school officially had a policy of setting homework very few of the staff actually did so on a regular basis.

At the beginning of the year, you get quite a few bringing in homework, but after that they lose so many books, you see, and they never have a pen, they lose books or else you give them their book to take home and you find it thrown in the corridor...and what you do you carry on fighting for a while and say well if you don't do homework you go on detention. Well that's just a laugh because they don't turn up for detention. They just don't want to do homework, so in a way you decide right well we don't do homework. So in a way they lose out. They don't do as much work as a kid in another school where they have two or three homeworks a week...I've lost so many books. It's been so much of a hassle to get the homework in it's just not worth it...You can't cope with getting through the day and having to run around, and what it means is that if they haven't got their books for the next lesson, then your next lessons going to be a right bloody mess and you're going to have confrontations over homework. So you'd rather have the books there, and keep them, and get through less work because your classroom organisation will at least benefit, and you avoid the confrontations.

(English Teacher)

For several of the teachers this reduction in expectations also applied to the standards of behaviour they demanded from the students. The norms of classroom behaviour which they attempted to negotiate with students were often set lower than they had been accustomed to in other schools.

You inevitably let far more go than you should do. You don't see things that you should see, and you're happy sometimes if everyone sits down and doesn't start throwing things. You've just got to accept a lot of the minor things that go on, otherwise you'd go bananas trying to chase everything up.

(Science Teacher)

I remember in the first term there was some kid who was spitting out of the window, and I remember saying, 'It's the 5th time I've asked you to stop spitting out of that window, and that child turned round to me and said, 'It's my fuckin' mouth I'll do what I want with it!' and I mean I could have said, 'Don't you dare say that to me!', but then again, you know why should I. I mean is there any point in getting wound up about things. I suppose you learn also at Milltown High what to pursue and what not to pursue and when to do it as well. Because I think the immediate response is to follow something through, but sometimes that just winds the situation up impossibly and the whole class get brought into your battle.

(Integrated Curriculum Teacher)

I'm more relaxed in class. I've lesser expectations. You ignore a lot. There's occasions when there's language flying and really there shouldn't be, but I just pretend that I haven't heard it, there's no point...I don't know, I think it continues outside of school. If they like you in school your car won't get scratched. That's how I see it.

(Music Teacher)

I think the standards of many staff have become very low. It's understandable the way some classes behave. People just have not got the stamina to keep up. If you tried to follow up everything that you should do according to the system then not only would you not be able to cope, but the whole disciplinary system would become overloaded. As it is the

heads of year find it almost impossible to keep up. And many staff just get ground down with it all and they take the easy way out which is to ignore it or forget it. But you've got to battle through, you've got to demand things from them, otherwise you'll get nothing.

(English Teacher)

For some as well as 'not seeing' deviance in the classroom and therefore avoiding having to deal with it, several staff admitted that they avoided areas around the school where they would be likely to encounter 'difficult' situations or student deviance. They 'didn't go looking for trouble' and thus certain parts of the school at certain times had become in a sense 'no go' areas where teachers had surrendered to student control. To some extent this is of course characteristic of most schools as teachers and students 'negotiate a truce' (Reynolds 1976), but at Milltown High it seemed to some (see David Benyon's comments in chapter 4) to have gone 'too far' and created a situation where several staff had abdicated responsibility for establishing normative control in many public areas of the school.

I think many of the staff, and I include myself in this here, have retreated to their classrooms. They 'don't see' things on the corridors anymore, they avoid going out at lesson changes, they 'forget' to do duties at break times. You can't blame them. I mean if you tried to pick up on everything you saw on the corridors you just wouldn't be able to cope with it. But it does make a difference to the whole school. Kids don't get to lessons on time, they're high when you get them in the room and so you've got to spend the first part of every lesson calming them down or dealing with latecomers.

(Maths Teacher)

This application of the strategy Woods calls 'absence or removal' and others have called 'confrontation avoidance' also applied to student attendance. The absence or truancy of students who were regarded as 'difficult' or 'trouble' was often ignored and not reported as one teacher explained to me:

I'm not going out of my way to check up on the likes of (a difficult student) if she doesn't turn up. I know I should, but with everything else

we have to do I'm afraid chasing up students like her is pretty low on my list of priorities. I've got better things to do than create trouble for myself.

(English Teacher)

One head of school/year complained to me about the 'slackness' of many classroom teachers in not checking and reporting student absences from lessons and that of tutors who, he claimed, often did not let parents know when students were off school for long periods, so much so that with many students in the final two years of their school life absence had come to be regarded as 'normal'. During the teacher's industrial action truancy became almost endemic amongst the 4th and 5th year students. Although this created enormous problems for staff because of the difficulties of syllabus coverage in examination courses, it was greeted with a sense of relief by many because they knew that in all probability they would have only a small number of students in their class and that the most troublesome ones would have 'wagged it'. Several staff explained to me that in fact it had become easier to cope in the school in recent years precisely because attendance rates had become so poor. It was something that they bemoaned on the one hand, but welcomed on the other.

To return to the problem of establishing classroom norms, those that attempted to fight the 'battles' over student classroom behaviour had to accept that they would frequently be long and hard, and often large amounts of teaching time would be spent or 'wasted' on behavioural negotiations and disciplinary matters. Moreover, 'battles' had to be fought over things that in other situations were taken for granted as 'won'.

You've got to get used to the fact that sometimes two or three lessons each week will be lost because the kids just won't behave or are being awkward. If they're like that well I just won't start a lesson until they are prepared to cooperate, and sometimes it takes a whole lesson.

(Science Teacher)

You'd just waste a tremendous amount of time getting them into the classroom reasonably, getting them to sit down quietly, checking if they've got pens and dealing with thoses who haven't got them, because we had a

rule in the department that anyone who came without a pen got lines, and it always amazed me how many would come to a lesson without pens. So you'd have to sort them out, and then later, when they didn't do the lines you'd have to follow that up and put them in detention and then make sure that they turned up to detention, and if they didn't seeing the head of year or whatever. In the classroom if any of them misbehaved and had to be sent out you'd have to fill in a slip, give them work and send them to 201 (the school's withdrawal unit), and later you'd have to follow that up. And then there'd be constant interruptions, late arrivals and sometimes kids wandering in and out. You just spent so much time dealing with all these disciplinary things.

(ex-Languages Teacher)

The changes that teachers had to make in teaching methods and in expectations of the students also meant that they had to adjust their expectations of themselves as teachers. Many teachers came to the school with established conceptions of themselves as teachers, of their own abilities and strengths, and expectations of their own performance in the classroom. In several cases these had to be modified. Teachers had to make changes in their self-conception, in the sort of teacher they considered themselves to be and in the way they felt the role ought to be performed. For example, one of the Integrated Curriculum teachers explained:

JP - I suppose I have re-assessed what the role of a teacher is especially in relationship to the type of children who come to Milltown High.

PF - And how would you say it has changed?

JP - That I'm not just a class teacher preparing them for academic success....I feel there are a lot of social skills they need. Little things like sitting down and listening to each other and respecting and tolerating each other. You've got to try and develop those things....They can be really aggressive and cruel to one another and so you've got to look after the victim. You've got to be more of a counsellor than a traditional teacher.

Several other teachers explained how they had become less of 'an academic sort of teacher', as one put it. They saw themselves less as subject specialists

orientated to the academic success of the students in their particular subject, more as 'teachers of young people' concerned about the behaviour and general social and personal development of the children. Their expectations of what they as teachers could achieve and the teaching methods they could successfully employ changed. They often sought rewards in their teaching and judged their own success not so much by communicating knowledge and helping the students to achieve exam success, but more by encouraging 'maturity' and conformity to social norms. In fact several teachers came to pride themselves on their ability to 'handle difficult children successfully'. They became, and felt that they were, 'successful' teachers of inner city children, but their criteria of 'success' involved adjustments to the inner city school.

4) Collective teacher strategies

So far I have described individual teacher adjustments and strategies. There were also other more collective strategies which helped teachers survive at Milltown High. 'Other staff' were frequently mentioned as a source of support.

What was so nice here was there was quite a bit of support, not from real senior staff, but I'd get somebody coming into my room at the end of the day, and my classroom would be in chaos. There'd be desks up turned, chairs all over the place, paper all over the floor from where they'd been rolling up bits of paper I'd given them and chuckin' them and pencils broken all over the place, and a member of staff would come in and say, 'Oh well how have things been then?', you know and, 'What you doing this weekend?', and they would very quietly put the desks straight with me as I tidied up, picked up all the pencils, put stuff in the litter bin, never remark about the state of the room, and by the time we'd finished talking about what was going to happen at the weekend the room would be straight, and he'd say, 'Well, forget about this place. See you Monday.' And that's what happened almost every Friday, which I really found good....Peter Mills was really kind, really great, also Graham Mellor. They were very fatherly to me. That's what I needed. They knew I was going to have a hard time, because they gave everyone else a hard time.

(English/Social Education Teacher)

A considerable sense of comradeship, reinforced by mutual adversity, appears to have developed at the school, and this helped many staff cope with the most difficult times. This seemed especially marked in the larger subject departments which acted as socialising groups for new members of staff (3).

The English department helped me a lot. At the end of the lesson I used to say to Mary and Alison, there was really just the three of us then...the support we gave each other...we used to have our coffee down there and we'd always have our break together. I'd just say, 'Oh this is awful', and they'd come in after the end of lessons, I think because they knew I was devastated, and we'd sit and have a cup of coffee and talk about it and

each of us had a horrible class that we had difficulty coping with, and we'd give each other a lot of back up, and that was very important, and I felt I could say, 'I find that class very difficult' and not feel any sense of failure.

(English teacher)

What was particularly important for many staff was the realisation that they were not alone in experiencing problems, that they as individuals were not to blame, and that their competence as teachers was not automatically in question if they experienced difficulties. Their identity and self-esteem were thus defended.

I did find it very difficult at first and I got depressed. I thought it was me....But I remember a staff meeting during my first term when (ex-headteacher) said that he couldn't cope with his first years, and that we all ought to share ways of managing and help each other, and that took a great weight off my mind.

(English Teacher)

Informal social contact with colleagues in what Goffman (1971) calls 'back regions' - the staffroom, departmental stock rooms, offices and after-school classrooms - fulfilled an important function in providing reassurance and defending the teacher's sense of self from attack and 'survival' threat.

It also provided an arena where alternative explanations of student attitudes and behaviour, 'the problems we are all facing', could be developed. These appeared to focus mainly around students' backgrounds and family circumstances (c.f. Stebbins 1975), which amongst the more 'radical' members of staff were extended into more politically orientated critiques of the deprivations of the inner city or the structure of society (see chapters on the English and Humanities departments). Stories about students and their families were swapped (Hammersley 1980, 1984) and provided evidence which enabled staff to 'understand' the 'reasons' behind the problems they were facing. However, whilst the emphasis was upon the students and their 'problems' a small number of staff did question their own role (see the comments of Jane Gabriel in chapter 6). But such views which meant challenging their own

position and function as teachers were not common given the investment (Woods 1979) most teacher had in their role.

Teacher relationships in back regions also provided an invaluable source of advice on possible coping strategies for new members of staff:

I had a long talk with Susan in the staffroom the other day (about the problems I've been having with my 2nd year). She said the best thing to do was to set them piles of written work, nothing too difficult or too experimental or different, but just get their heads down, and watch them all the time, and that does work.

(English Teacher)

It was often these socialising experiences which helped teachers to 'survive' at Milltown High and adjust to the prevailing norms and self-definitions of staff culture or sub-culture .

Back regions were also areas in which humour was common (see Woods 1979, Stebbins 1980, Hammersley 1980). Lampooning and making light of serious and difficult situations often served as a form of tension release. It promoted solidarity and strengthened the attachment of individuals to the group. The use of ridicule also conveyed explanations for common problems. As such humour was often a way of coping at Milltown High. As one member of staff rather poignantly said, 'If you didn't laugh you'd cry!'.

Here also various collective staff strategies were discussed and planned. In a year characterised by teacher industrial action, not surprisingly, co-operative action to defend working conditions was high on the agenda. Union meetings were frequent and these were not just discussions concerning the pay dispute, but also discussions about how to protect and improve the situation of classroom teachers in the school. The problems created by disruptive students, supervision of corridors and security for staff threatened by student assaults were often raised, and questions were put to 'management' i.e. the headteacher and senior staff, about what they intended to do about these issues. On one occasion the school was thrown into turmoil when the members of one of the unions collectively refused to teach a boy who the head and school governors recommended should return to school following suspension for an assault on a member of staff. This threatened to develop into a 'Poundswick' like situation in which teachers refused to teach students following suspension

and were suspended themselves by Manchester L.E.A. in 1985/6 (4). However, a compromise was suggested by the head in which the boy was referred to a local Intermediate Treatment Centre and the union members, realising their weak situation, subsequently backed down.

Collective refusal to teach like this was rare, though the fact that it occurred was an indication of the strength of feeling amongst some staff about the difficult circumstances in which they worked. Other collective strategies included the persuading of 'management' to organise and staff a 'withdrawal unit' (called 201 after the room it was housed in), a permanently staffed room where students who were badly behaved during lessons could be sent and supervised. Troublesome students could be removed and isolated, although on occasions the staff supervising the unit had problems with the concentration of such students in one place. I discovered also the existence of an informal agreement between some of the heads of department that certain students who appeared to be flouting the disciplinary system by refusing to do detentions, etc., would not be taught, but sent to 201 thus effectively suspended internally, until they conformed. Staff had also succeeded in persuading 'management' to mount what was called 'patrol' in which a senior or experienced teacher patrolled the building during lesson time directing students to lessons, dealing with students truanting from lessons, and generally being available to help deal with problems that arose. An 'emergency' system where classroom teachers could contact a senior teacher immediately to summon help should they need it was also negotiated. These strategies of course were all part of the school's disciplinary and control system which in many comprehensive schools, as Denscombe (1985) points out, has become central to, in fact synonymous with, the system of 'pastoral care'.

The effect on staff attitudes

Denscombe (1985) argues that the difficulties teachers face in maintaining classroom control often result in the development of certain attitudes to teaching, what he calls 'strategic dispositions'. Indeed, the subject of 'what teaching does to teachers' has been of concern since Waller posed the question in 1932 (see D.Hargreaves 1982 for a general discussion). Of course teachers' attitudes to their work are affected by a large number of factors and it is difficult to isolate the influence of one variable, but 'coping' at Milltown

High did appear to have a strong effect on teachers' views of themselves and their work. Here I want to briefly describe some of the dominant orientations I observed at the school.

Amongst a minority of teachers there was what can best be called a frustrated idealism. This attitude was most common amongst the younger, progressively orientated teachers who were in the English and Integrated Curriculum departments. They clung to a liberal/radical/romantic view of education as a means of social reform and individual liberation and continued to do their utmost to implement a progressive pedagogy. They were enthusiastic about curriculum innovation and change and threw themselves into new developments with energy and enthusiasm. Anti-Racist and Anti-Sexist reforms and action were high on their personal agendas. They found the cynicism of some staff and the continued talk about 'discipline' distasteful. They were heavily committed to the school and its students, often spending many extra hours in lesson preparation, marking, planning and patient counselling of students. In this sense they attempted to preserve their idealistic vision of education and positive view of teaching despite the pressures and constraints at Milltown High.

However, this vision was often challenged and dented, as we have seen, and these teachers expressed frequent disappointment and frustration at being unable to realise fully their ideals and to be the sort of teachers they wanted to be. Their feelings about their work were intense. They experienced extreme highs and lows in their teaching, relishing the 'buzz' of a successful lesson, but suffering intense gloom after a bad one. Some were willing or forced to compromise and live with these feelings, disappointments and frustrations, accepting that they were doing their best in difficult circumstances. In situations of survival threat they were most likely to use strategies such as fraternization, relationship-building and co-option. Others, especially those without family ties and commitments, were less willing to adjust and were more likely to leave the school and seek more satisfying avenues elsewhere.

At the opposite extreme there were also a minority (a smaller minority) of teachers at Milltown High who had attitudes of cynical detachment towards their work. They tended to distance themselves from their role, avoiding the investment and commitment of the idealists. A number saw little future in teaching and derived little satisfaction from their work, and had begun to invest their energies in other jobs or interests, sometimes with the intention

of eventually leaving teaching altogether. They adopted an instrumental attitude to their jobs, and frequently had time off school for minor illnesses and complaints. They sometimes adopted a flippant, 'couldn't care less' attitude to the problems of the school, and sought scapegoats - 'a weak head', 'inept management', 'remote local politicians' and 'maladjusted and disturbed students'. They felt that little could be done and were resigned to 'surviving' in the easiest way possible, often avoiding 'difficult' situations and ignoring incidents that they could have dealt with. They were cynical about internal change, curriculum development and the head's 'whole school policies', and tended to lampoon those who became involved. They suffered badly from many of what David Hargreaves (1982) calls the 'occupational diseases of teaching' and sometimes threatened to infect other staff.

In between these two extremes lay the majority of teachers at Milltown High. Their attitudes can best be described as pragmatic. They had only weak attachments to particular educational ideologies, orientating themselves more to the practical concerns of coping in the classroom where 'experience counts, theory doesn't' (A.Hargreaves 1984). Here they accepted the problems and constraints of their work situation and worked out what they regarded as the most satisfactory, practical solutions, utilising many of the strategies I have described above, especially classwork management, occupational therapy and various forms of domination. They were often ambivalent in their attitudes to their work, sometimes depressed, sometimes happy, but more often than not resigned or slightly pessimistic. Committed to their job rather than the school, they were usually established career teachers who, as Riseborough (1985) points out, had become 'battlehardened' and come to take some pride in their ability to cope with 'dirty work' (Hughes 1937). Idealists they thought rather naive, cynics they thought unprofessional. They were reluctant to engage in curriculum or pedagogic innovation which challenged the basis of their established practices. To do so would have been to upset the often delicate and hard won dominance they had over classroom life. And they worried about the practical implications and problems of reforms such as the integrated curriculum, mixed ability grouping, Anti-Racism and Anti-Sexism, counselling caution and the value of 'stability', 'structure' and 'playing it safe'. Experience had taught them to be conservative. Their priorities were order and the maintenance of discipline.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that the difficulties faced by teachers at Milltown High in establishing classroom order were intense. The attitudes and behaviour of many of their students deriving from class, ethnic and youth sub-cultures, themselves partially a product of wider structural forces, relationships and changes, were often hostile to schooling. As a teacher's ability to establish and maintain classroom order is crucial to their sense of competence then many teachers were faced with a 'survival threat'. Some solved this problem by horizontal or vertical mobility when the occasion arose, as it did at the L.E.A. secondary school reorganisation. Others, of course, did not give themselves the problem in the first place as they did not consider working in the school. Thus at times positions in the school were difficult to staff. But those who did come to work or found themselves working in the school, were forced, as were the Chicago teachers Howard Becker described, to adjust to their situation and 'cope'. This generally involved modifying their pedagogy in a variety of ways, learning new disciplinary techniques and reducing their academic and behavioural expectations of students. For some it also meant re-defining their expectations of themselves as teachers and their conception of the sort of teacher they were. Many teachers, I have argued, developed what Stebbins (1977) calls a 'custodial orientation' to their work and school life in which they placed 'emphasis on control at the expense of teaching', the former, as Andy Hargreaves (1979) notes, often passing for teaching. As with the teachers Peter Woods (1979) studied 'survival' rather than education became their predominant concern.

This inevitably affected the educational opportunities and experiences of students at Milltown High, and in some cases further alienated them from their schooling. All students at the school, Afro/Caribbean, Asian and white, were likely to experience a schooling which tended to stress behaviour and conformity rather than academic achievement (c.f. Bowles and Gintis 1976), 'mindless copying' rather than problem solving, surveillance rather than the opportunity to show initiative, and low expectations of achievement rather than high. It may be then that the disadvantages faced by ethnic minority students in the educational system stem not from their treatment at the hands of 'racist' teachers or from direct or indirect in-school processes which discriminate against them (though no doubt these factors are of importance in

some contexts and for some individuals), but from the simple fact that they are more likely to attend what Roberts et. al. (1983) call 'low achieving schools'. The evidence of this study supports the conclusion of Roberts et. al. that the 'under achievement' of Afro/Caribbean students 'could be attributed entirely to the fact that they reside in districts and attend schools where the attainment of all pupils are below average' (my emphasis). Taking a crude indicator of school achievement, the G.C.E. O level/C.S.E. Grade 1 pass rate at Milltown High was one of the lowest in the city at 0.52 passes per student in 1986 (5). Here is clearly an issue that merits further, more systematic, examination than I have been able to give.

The irony of all this, as writers like Willis (1977), Weis (1985) and Riseborough (1985) point out, is that it is not just the teachers or the administrators of the educational system who produce this situation, but the students themselves, who through their 'resistance' succeed in helping to create the unequal educational outcomes which ensure many of them remain members of the working class or 'underclass'. In fact to some extent both students and teachers are trapped in a spiral of alienation and under achievement. The structural 'underclass' location of many of the students at the school produces a peer group culture characterised by low academic motivation, low self-expectations and rejection of school values and norms. The resulting behaviour of these students creates 'survival' problems for the teachers who cope by adopting strategies which contribute to the underachievement of their students and the perpetuation of their 'underclass' status. School life and its effects, it is important to emphasise, cannot be understood one dimensionally. We must consider the dialectical effects of teacher/student relationships. As Riseborough (1985) lucidly comments, with reference to Althusser's Educational Ideological State Apparatus illustrated as a 'pupil mincer/processor' (see Open University 1977), 'The paradox is the more efficiently they (the students) mince teachers, the more they ultimately ensure the efficacy of the pupil mincer'.

Footnotes

- 1) Approximately 2/3rds of the staff left and had to be replaced.
- 2) The teachers at schools like Milltown High tended to be more militant in their interpretation of the industrial action than did their colleagues in more suburban schools. Strikes and disruption were therefore more common in such schools.
- 3) Those staff who were not members of large subject departments, but were perhaps the only teacher teaching their particular subject, and there were increasing numbers of them as the school contracted, suffered in this respect.
- 4) In the autumn term of 1985 teachers at Poundswick High School, Manchester refused to teach a group of students who were returned to the school following suspension. The teachers involved were then suspended by the LEA and the rest of the school staff went on strike in response. The dispute closed the school for much of the 1985-86 academic year (see the columns of the Times Educational Supplement for that year)
- 5) Only two students, an Asian boy and an Afro/Caribbean boy, achieved 5 or more O/CSE grade 1 passes in 1986.

Chapter Ten

Conclusion

This study has had two main aims. First, to describe the way teachers in one secondary school responded in terms of policy and practice to the fact that they were educating students from and for a multi-ethnic society. Second, to shed some empirical light on certain theoretical questions in the sociology of education about the role of schools in reproducing the social characteristics of modern society.

In this chapter I want to summarise my findings on these two themes, then discuss the policy implications of the research, both for schools and L.E.A.s, and finally point to other possible areas of research that may lead to a greater understanding of the way in which the educational system caters for the needs of ethnic minority students and prepares all students for the task of creating a non-racist society.

Policy and Practice in Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education at Milltown High School

Milltown High School was in an L.E.A. which had developed policies on Multicultural Education in the late 1970s and more recently on Anti-Racist Education. At the same time as the L.E.A. was formulating its policy on Multicultural Education the staff at Milltown High were approaching the same issue. In fact L.E.A. policy was in part a reaction to and legitimisation of changes which were being made in 'pioneering' schools like Milltown High. Following the appointment of a new headteacher in 1977 a working party was formed which, after long deliberation, formulated a policy commitment to Multicultural Education. This was followed in 1983 by a further commitment to Anti-Racism.

The emergence of Multicultural Education on the school agenda in the late 1970s was the result of a number of factors. On the one hand there was a concern about the threat to order, both in school and out, from young, especially Afro/Caribbean, people. In the 1970s many such youngsters underachieved and became alienated and disruptive in school, causing an increasing problems of control. Multicultural Education was, in one sense, an attempt to co-opt this group into the school system. As Denscombe (1985) notes co-option strategies have become more important to teachers in recent years as automatic deference to their authority has become less common and 'domination

strategies' have become less acceptable. Multicultural Education aimed to win greater commitment of ethnic minority youngsters to the school system and increase their motivation by reflecting their cultures and concerns in the school curriculum. This was part of a more general move by teachers to reduce the alienation and consequent disruption of (mainly) working class students by introducing more 'relevant', 'interesting' and 'student-centred' curriculum and school practices. Similar arguments can be put forward to explain the growth of Anti-Racist Education in the 1980s (see N.Sivanandan 1984), although in the case of Milltown High School the move to an Anti-Racist policy was precipitated more by the request from the L.E.A. that schools formulate an 'institutional policy on racism'.

However, it would be wrong to see moves to Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education at Milltown High as merely the school's response to a threat to social order (Carby 1982), and as the introduction of new, more subtle forms of social control. Milltown High School's commitment arose from a genuine concern amongst a number of 'radical' teachers to encourage more than just compliance. They wanted to enhance the life chances of ethnic minority students, develop the skills and knowledge of all their students and encourage them to be anti-racist. They were concerned with social justice in education and wished to educate their students to be thinking, politically aware and skilled adults capable of viewing the world critically. They saw reform of the school's curriculum and practices as a way of achieving these ends. Thus the move to Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education also had more 'radical' origins and aims.

This was especially true of David Benyon, the head teacher appointed in 1984. He was strongly committed to an egalitarian and progressive educational ideology and saw education as a means of enhancing social justice and as a force for social change. His commitment to Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education, which he saw in terms of equal opportunities, education about a variety of different cultures and the social and political education of students, was part of this. It was central to the way he wanted Milltown High School to change and develop. He incorporated Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism directly into his practice in appointing staff, setting norms of behaviour for both staff and students and in his teaching in assemblies, and he also tried to encourage staff to develop practice in Multicultural and Anti-Racist

Education. Here he did not adopt a directive role, but sought to encourage and influence.

The L.E.A. and school policy statements were also intended to facilitate and encourage the development of such practice. But whilst the statements were clear in their commitment to Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism, they did not set out specifically how staff were to incorporate this into their practice. Moreover, there had been little formal discussion amongst staff about the implementation of policy.

How then did class teachers in the school respond to the policy commitment? Their responses varied. The majority of teachers accepted that the school should encourage cultural tolerance amongst students and that they as teachers should adopt an individualistic, non-racist approach in their relationships with students. But a minority, mainly concentrated in the English and Integrated Curriculum departments, felt that Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education was more than this. Their views were similar to David Benyon's in that they saw Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education as involving the broad social and political education of their students and the development of progressive curriculum and pedagogy.

There was considerable difference of opinion amongst teachers about the issue of racism in education. Some teachers were hostile to the implication contained in policy statements that they might be racist in their attitudes or practice. They felt that they were being accused of something they regarded as unprofessional on the basis of very little evidence. Others felt that there might be, and certainly had been in the past, instances of racism in school curricula and in teacher attitudes, and they attempted to guard against these in their own practice. A small number of teachers thought that school practices and the working of the educational system as a whole could disadvantage ethnic minority students more indirectly, but found it difficult to establish meaningful implications for their individual practice as teachers.

In terms of practice in education for non-racism several departments had made a great deal of effort to include aspects of the history and cultures of minority groups in their curriculum content and to teach about the variety of human cultures. In the English department, for example, the teachers had included literature written by and about ethnic minority people, especially Afro/Caribbean people, and had developed an approach designed to increase awareness of linguistic variety and stress the validity of different language

forms. In the Humanities department the second year curriculum consisted of regional studies of the history, geography and religions of the main areas from which their students' families had originated, and in subsequent years topics and concepts were generally illustrated with content drawn from a variety of societies in different parts of the world. In the Integrated Curriculum similar approaches were adopted. Specific teaching about racism was also concentrated in these departments. The English teachers often chose class readers which directly raised the issue of racism and used them to discuss the origins, nature and effects of racism. The Integrated Curriculum teachers also used readers like this with the first (and later second) year students. In Humanities the teachers were less willing to raise such issues directly, but in their 4th and 5th year course they did teach a unit on Persecution and Prejudice which dealt with racism in South Africa and Nazi Germany. Outside of these departments there were one or two attempts to introduce anti-racist work into the curriculum. The Science department had developed a unit of work in their third year curriculum which stressed the non-elite nature of Science and the role of 'Third World' people in the significant scientific revolutions. The head of department was also searching for ways of introducing curriculum elements which stressed the social implications of Science. The Maths department had introduced some curriculum materials which raised issues concerning world inequality through the use of a computer data bank. Another significant development was the introduction of the Black Studies unit into the 4th year ACS, a course taught by a local group of Afro/Caribbean people. In other departments teachers had not incorporated this type of work into their curriculum, often because they felt it was inappropriate to their subject paradigm and pedagogy.

How did this education for non-racism at Milltown High compare with the model I proposed in my introductory chapter? Certainly in several areas of the school curriculum information was taught about a variety of cultures and societies and about the history and cultures of ethnic minority people. So far as I was able to assess this was not 'oversimplified caricature'. A number of teachers who taught such content explained that they were also concerned with the way students received and interpreted it and sometimes used student responses to initiate discussions about attitudes to other ethnic groups and cultural practices. In especially the English and Integrated Curriculum departments clear attempts were made to teach about how racist attitudes are

formed and can influence social relationships, and to encourage non-racist attitudes and behaviour. Here too the teachers attempted to include the issue of racism within a curriculum orientated to teaching about broader political and social issues. They were also committed to a pedagogy designed to encourage the sorts of skills which I felt were important to Anti-Racist Education as part of a broader programme of social and political education.

In the Humanities department teachers were less concerned to teach about racism and had more pragmatic pedagogical aims. Even so the Humanities teachers did teach about many issues of social and political importance. Unfortunately teaching in the Social Education Department, which was allocated one lesson each week on the school timetable, was rather confused as there was no established syllabus content or pedagogy and no permanent teachers. Individual teachers tended to 'do their own thing' and none that I spoke to taught about racism or race relations. In fact in the lower years Social Education time was often integrated into Humanities, English or Integrated Curriculum time and in the upper years largely consisted of Careers work.

The social and political education curriculum that I observed did not aim to encourage an uncritical acceptance of contemporary social arrangements or present only a harmonious image of the world. It did not seek to merely equip students to fit in with established social forms. The aim of all the teachers I talked to was to encourage awareness of different views, opinions and perspectives some of which would be critical of the status quo. However, the strong political commitments of the English teachers sometimes resulted in them presenting predominantly critical viewpoints and neglecting those which might be more in favour of contemporary arrangements. Moreover, whilst they were committed to a discussion-based pedagogy and free expression of opinion, in practice they found this ideal difficult to realise. In this sense one might say they failed to present a range of views to the students. In the Humanities department some areas of the curriculum specifically introduced students to a range of viewpoints on social issues (the 'Beliefs' Unit in the 4th year curriculum for example), but in the teaching units I observed there were sometimes rather subtle biases in curriculum materials. Some of these appeared supportive of the status quo and some critical. In the unit on Persecution and Prejudice there was a clear and, in my view, justifiable, anti-apartheid and anti-fascist imbalance. This paralleled the emphasis on the value of anti-racism in English teaching.

It must also be noted that David Benyon had given priority to the establishment of school councils which gave some students experience of participation in a democratic organisation. However, teacher/student relations, perhaps inevitably, were still dominated by marked inequalities of status and power, with teachers dominating most aspects of school life.

The type of pedagogy which I felt was important to Anti-Racist Education was utilised less fully. The English teachers were committed to this way of teaching, but unfortunately were frequently frustrated in their attempts to employ their desired pedagogy because of the problems of classroom control posed by many of their students. The Humanities teachers were less committed. They felt teachers should use more traditional didactic methods and retain a more autocratic role. This, they believed, was necessary given the practical constraints in the school, but it was also central to their view of teaching. These views were shared by many other teachers in the school. In fact the majority of teachers outside the English and Integrated Curriculum departments did not see Anti-Racist Education as involving any specific pedagogical commitment. Their views here were largely derived from their own subject sub-cultures and their pragmatic response to teaching at Milltown High.

Thus the teachers at Milltown High had made some progress, especially in curriculum terms, towards putting into practice the type of education for non-racism that I outlined in my introductory chapter. It must be said, however, that the school's programme of social and political education was rather ad hoc with little co-ordination of objectives or curriculum content between different departments. This was perhaps a product of the dominance of subject sub-cultures in the school, the lack of any overall curriculum planning or co-ordinating group and, of course, the disruptive events in the school's recent history.

In my introductory chapter I also argued that Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education involved a commitment to equal opportunities for students of all racial and ethnic groups within the school. This, I suggested, meant ensuring that there was no racism or practices which indirectly disadvantage students from particular racial or ethnic groups in the school. It also meant attempting to redress the home background disadvantages experienced by students from particular racial or ethnic groups. What progress had been made at Milltown High in this respect?

Whilst racial attitudes are clearly a very difficult area to investigate, and it is possible that teachers concealed their 'real' views from me, in my formal and informal discussions with them and my observation around the school I found very few examples of racist attitudes amongst the teachers. In fact teachers were generally positive in their attitudes to student ethnicity. The students confirmed this view. Hardly any of those I interviewed thought there was racism amongst the school staff. Only one rather infamous ex-teacher was the butt of student complaints. Unlike the schools which Wright (1986) studied there was very little animosity between teachers and students along racial lines. Similarly relationships between students of different racial or ethnic groups were fairly harmonious. Thus the racial attitudes of teachers and students did not provide the basis for any inferior treatment of particular racial or ethnic groups.

In my general classroom observation and in the case study I conducted of a third year class I also did not find that ethnic minority students occupied lower status positions in classroom social structures, and I found little evidence of differential treatment of students on racial or ethnic lines. In the one classroom where I did find such treatment it was confined to only one aspect of teacher/student interaction and was explicable in terms of the seating choices of the friendship groups and strategies that the teacher used to cope with the discipline problems posed by the class, rather than the teacher's racial attitudes.

The school had abandoned the practice of dividing students into ability bands and introduced mixed ability grouping to the end of the third year, followed by a mixed system of subject setting and mixed ability grouping. This meant that racism was less likely to occur in the school's system of formal differentiation simply because there were fewer potentially discriminatory decisions to be made and students were not formally assessed before they had the opportunity to display their potential. Where students were divided into sets I found no evidence that allocation decisions were influenced by racist views.

However, when I examined the distribution of students from different ethnic groups in subject sets I found that Afro/Caribbean boys were slightly less likely to be found in the top sets than would have been anticipated given their numbers in the school. In other words in competition for the opportunity to enter a top set Afro/Caribbean boys were less likely to be successful than

might have been expected. There could have been a number of reasons for this. Afro/Caribbean boys in this particular year might have had less ability on average. In the absence of 'objective' indicators of student ability I had no means of ascertaining if this was in fact the case. Another possibility derives from the fact that teachers used a number of criteria when deciding which set to place a student in. Ability was clearly important and this was usually assessed by end of year tests (when they were held) and work completed during the year. But motivation, behaviour and a student's ability to cope with the academic pressures of top set work were also significant. Afro/Caribbean boys in the year group I studied were more likely to hold anti-school attitudes and more likely to express their alienation by behaviour which brought them into conflict with teachers. They were thus more likely to be seen by the teachers as behavioural problems and thus less likely to secure a top set place. This might be regarded as unfair if we believe that a student's behaviour is an irrelevant consideration in judging their potential (in comparison to their peers) to utilise the opportunity of a top set place. I would tend to agree here with many of the teachers I spoke to who argued that this is not (and should not be) the case, that student motivation and psychological state, as indicated by their behaviour in class and around the school, are important factors in making judgements of this nature. However, it was possible that because this system was adopted Afro/Caribbean boys tended to be slightly disadvantaged by the formal system of differentiation at Milltown High, if we accept that the lower status groups received inferior treatment and allocation to such groups tends to reduce student motivation. However, I found that the reverse was true of Afro/Caribbean girls. They were slightly more likely to be allocated to high status groups and thus were perhaps advantaged by the process of formal differentiation.

There did not appear to be any other practices which disadvantaged particular racial or ethnic group students within the school. The assessment and evaluation procedures that I saw did not appear to be 'culturally biased' in the way I defined this term. There were clear policies on dealing with incidents of racial abuse and violence in the school, and whilst some teachers implemented these policies more conscientiously than others, none of the students I interviewed complained of racial harassment or intimidation. Many of the teachers were knowl^{de}_{able} of and sensitive toward minority group cultures and teachers did not display the sort of cultural incompetence

described by Driver (1979) in their interaction with minority group students. The school's disciplinary regulations seemed generally fair and relevant. They were related to universalistic behavioural expectations, but the cultural norms of minority group students were not unnecessarily regarded as deviant. For example, the use of 'patois' by Afro/Caribbean students was not frowned upon by teachers and rules about dress were flexible. In fact most teachers adopted a sensitive and open-minded approach to the expression of students' background cultures. However, the greater 'expressivity' of Afro/Caribbean youth culture did seem on occasions more likely to bring Afro/Caribbean students into conflict with teachers, but it is difficult to know how much such conflict derived specifically from ethnicity and how much from general youth culture. The latter was, in fact, often a mixture of several ethnic and class forms.

I did not come across any curriculum material which denigrated minority groups during my field work, and was informed that such material had been thrown away and replaced. Moreover, most teachers attempted to ensure that materials they used figured ethnic minority characters. However, this was not always possible. Some teachers found that despite an increasing number of publications of this type, there were still areas where they had to use curriculum materials which appeared to ignore the existence of minority groups, because others were unavailable.

Thus I think we can conclude that the teachers at Milltown High had succeeded in eliminating or avoiding practices within the school that were racist or which indirectly disadvantaged students from particular racial or ethnic groups. So far as I could ascertain (1) this was also the case in the appointment of staff. Whilst the staffing structure at Milltown High was still ethnically unbalanced (2) David Benyon took great care to ensure appointments and promotion procedures were fair and had appointed several ethnic minority teachers. He was, however, restricted in many appointments he made during the time I was in the school by an L.E.A. policy, negotiated with the teacher unions, to appoint teachers from within the L.E.A.. In a time of falling school rolls, financial constraint and teacher surplus this was intended to utilise existing staff efficiently and avoid the need for redundancy, but as a result access to jobs tended to be restricted to existing, predominantly white staff.

The question of providing additional resources for students from educationally disadvantaged racial or ethnic groups is a complex and sensitive issue as I explained in my introductory chapter. It involves deciding which

groups are disadvantaged, in what way and what form of positive provision is appropriate, questions which have rarely been adequately addressed in the area of race and ethnicity.

Not surprisingly the staff at Milltown High had no clear policy on this issue. The school itself was favourably treated, in comparison to many other schools, by the L.E.A. in terms of staff. This was mainly the result of a L.E.A. decision to staff small secondary schools at the level they felt was required to maintain comprehensive curriculum provision, which was part of a wider policy of making small additional provision to schools in the more socially and economically disadvantaged parts of the city (3). This meant that the school was entitled to a minimum of 40 teachers to cover all main subject areas and thus had a relatively low teacher:student ratio. The school was also allocated three extra teachers from funds under Section 11 of the 1966 Local Government Act to meet 'the needs of Commonwealth immigrants' and their descendants.

Within the school itself there was no system of assessing which students were educationally disadvantaged by virtue of their home background or of making compensatory provision specifically for such students. The school did make some positive provision, through its 'Learning Support Department', for those students with 'special educational needs'. This included students with specific physical handicaps (such as partial hearing), those whose academic progress was significantly behind the norm for their age and those who were considered to be emotionally immature or 'disturbed'. Such students were identified by ordinary class teachers and tutors and referred to the two teachers in the Learning Support Department for additional help. These teachers aimed to bring the student's academic or emotional attainment up to an acceptable minimum level, although these levels were never clearly defined. The students who received this positive provision may have included some who were educationally disadvantaged by virtue of their home background, but it may also have included some genetically less talented from relatively privileged backgrounds. A certain level of underperformance, for whatever reason, rather than educational disadvantage (in the sense I have used the term) was the criterion used for allocating additional educational resources.

What of the school's 'Section 11 teachers'? I have explained that shortly before I began my field work the Home Office required L.E.A.s to identify their Section 11 teachers, specify more clearly the work these teachers were doing

and tie it more closely to 'the needs of Commonwealth Immigrants' and their descendents. Before this Milltown High, along with many others in the L.E.A., had used their Section 11 provision merely to add three teachers to the school staff. In the absence of a large number of students of Asian origin in need of first stage E.S.L. tuition the school had adopted a policy of utilizing this extra staffing for the benefit of all students in the school. The more favourable teacher:student ratio which resulted was seen as a way of indirectly providing for the needs of minority students, but it was also seen as an additional provision for all students in the school many of whom suffered educational disadvantages deriving from their class rather than racial or ethnic background.

As my field work ended the three Section 11 teachers at Milltown High had spent only a term in their new roles. Much of their time had been spent in discussion with other teachers and members of the local ethnic minority communities attempting to clarify their role and establishing the 'needs' of minority students. This was a difficult and sometimes confusing task. Many of the staff felt that ethnic minority students did not suffer educational disadvantages over and above their white peers and wanted the teachers to provide them with more general assistance in the classroom especially when they were faced with 'difficult' teaching groups. Discussions with local minority people had been brief and often inconclusive. The Section 11 teachers themselves were committed, as were most teachers in the school, to working with students on a non-racial/ethnic basis and found it difficult to justify spending their time exclusively with ethnic minority students. They had gone some way in examining the disadvantages that might specifically be faced by Afro/Caribbean students as a result of background dialects, but this was still at an exploratory stage. Thus the Section 11 teachers found themselves in a difficult situation faced with different, sometimes conflicting expectations of their role.

A number of teachers in the English and Integrated Curriculum departments were aware of the potential language difficulties faced by Afro/Caribbean students, but in the hurley-burley of classroom life they felt it was difficult to identify which students, the exact nature of their problems and the appropriate methods and resources required to rectify them. Moreover, they also felt many of the white students suffered educational disadvantages and did not therefore feel that they could devote much extra time to dealing specifically

with Afro/Caribbean students. A small amount of additional provision was directed towards the language needs of Afro/Caribbean students in the form of the Afro/Caribbean language project, but this was very much a small scale pilot project.

Thus Milltown High school made only limited positive provision for students educationally disadvantaged by virtue of their racial or ethnic background. This is perhaps understandable given the difficult and sensitive nature of some of the issues involved in assessing disadvantage and in making such provision.

In my penultimate chapter I argued that it was important to consider the whole question of equal opportunities in a broader context than a single school. Milltown High school was a small neighbourhood comprehensive school in the inner city. It was part of a wider local educational system in which economic, social and cultural resources played a large part in determining the educational routes of students from different social backgrounds. Many of the students who attended Milltown High faced extreme social and educational problems as a result of the inequality, disadvantage and discrimination experienced by their parents. The sub-cultures which develop in the inner city in response to such inequalities, and which are reflected and partly reproduced in schools, meant that a substantial proportion of the student intake at Milltown High were hostile to or ambivalent towards their schooling. Faced with these problems in the classroom teachers were forced to adapt in order to 'survive' and this had implications for the educational experiences of all the students. Thus minority students at Milltown High were not disadvantaged by racist teachers or by practices within the school which indirectly restricted their chances of success, but by the structure and organisation of the wider educational system which permits those with greater economic and cultural resources to place their children on more favourable routes in the educational race. As Sally Tomlinson (1984) notes:

Although the structure of the state system changed with moves to comprehensivisation, equality of opportunity to be selected for an academic education did not increase for the children of manual working class parentage. Inner city schools - those primarily attended by manual working class children and minority children, have seldom been able to offer

opportunities equal even to those of suburban comprehensive schools.

(p.119)

Thus it seems that even when equal opportunities are ensured within a single school, wider inequalities in the educational system may have a powerful effect.

Theoretical Issues

I now want to discuss how the data I collected relates to the theoretical questions which I raised in my introductory chapter. My concern was with the broad question of the role schools have in the reproduction of some of the basic social characteristics of British society. More specifically I was interested in the extent to which in-school processes influence the chances of educational success of students from different ethnic or racial groups and thus in the role of such processes in reproducing ethnic/racial inequality. I was also interested in examining an aspect of Marxist theory in education which suggests that the curriculum of working class schools encourages amongst students attitudes and values which are supportive of capitalist organisations.

On the first question four main ideas have been advanced which suggest that in-school processes are likely to significantly disadvantage Afro/Caribbean children and are an important factor in explaining their relative underachievement. First, there is the theory that teachers tend to have negative views and low expectations of Afro/Caribbean students, that such students therefore receive inferior treatment in the classroom and school, that their educational self-esteem and motivation are reduced, and they consequently underachieve. Second, there is the associated theory that the curriculum of schools neglects or denigrates the culture of Afro/Caribbean students who, as a result, suffer lowered self-esteem and academic motivation, become hostile to their teachers and underachieve. Third, is the idea suggested by Driver (1979) that minority students are at a disadvantage in schools because teachers lack the cultural competence to deal confidently and adequately with them. Finally, there is the view that the definitions of ability and worth that are routinely used by teachers are based on the cultural forms of dominant groups. According to this view working class and ethnic minority students will find it difficult to perform successfully because evaluation criteria are culturally biased and they lack the appropriate 'cultural capital'.

What light does the data I have collected shed on these theories? My study gives little empirical support for the first two. As I have already explained I found very little evidence of negative teacher attitudes towards Afro/Caribbean students or of low academic expectations specifically of such students. I also found no evidence of differential treatment of students on ethnic or racial

lines either in classrooms or in wider school processes. In fact students of both main ethnic groups were, on the whole, treated equitably and fairly. Whilst I did not systematically examine student self-esteem, on the basis of the data I collected it seemed highly unlikely that the self-esteem or academic motivation of Afro/Caribbean students specifically was lowered by the attitudes^{of} and treatment they received from their teachers. Moreover, the curriculum of Milltown High school included substantial and positive reference to aspects of the history and culture of Afro/Caribbean people and therefore was unlikely to contribute to any lowering of self-esteem or alienation.

The sort of interaction patterns that Driver (1979) discovered were also not apparent at Milltown High. Teachers' relationships with their Afro/Caribbean students were not marred by cultural confusion and uncertainty. Teachers did not misunderstand and misinterpret the behaviour of Afro/Caribbean students, nor did they feel threatened and react inconsistently to the expression of specifically Afro/Caribbean cultural form.

I think there were two main reasons for this. First, as the vast majority of Afro/Caribbean students had been born and brought up in Britain distinctively Caribbean aspects of their behaviour were less marked. The use of strong Caribbean creoles, for example, was much less common. In fact in this part of Milltown there had been considerable mixing of youth cultural forms. Aspects of Afro/Caribbean culture had merged with white working class and popular media based culture to form distinctively new youth cultures, often based on mixed race groups (c.f. Hewitt 1986). In this sense the behaviour of Afro/Caribbean young people was less culturally strange to their teachers. A second reason is that many of the teachers had spent a considerable proportion of their teaching careers in urban multi-ethnic schools. They had thus had far more opportunity than the teachers studied by Driver, for example, to become familiar and competent in dealing with Afro/Caribbean culture. Thus the confusion and uncertainty felt by many teachers in the early 1970s when dealing with Afro/Caribbean young people, who were sometimes fairly recent migrants, was not in evidence at Milltown High.

This conclusion gives some support to the application to the educational arena of views put forward by writers such as Glass (1960) and Patterson (1965) in the 1960s. They argued that the cultural strangeness of recent migrants combined with the suspicion and cultural ignorance of the indigenous white population explained many of the problems faced by New Commonwealth

immigrants in the 1950s and early 1960s. They predicted that the immigrant population would, over time, adapt to British social norms and mores, and the host population would slowly come to understand and accept their cultural differences. They anticipated a process of mutual adjustment, a gradual

integration of ethnic minority people into mainstream British society and the eventual disappearance of hostility and discrimination.

On a societal level this model was clearly grossly optimistic. It underestimated the extent of discrimination and the deep-seated nature of much British racism, and it failed to consider the significance of structural divisions in the society which migrants entered. However, in a specifically educational context these ideas have some explanatory potential. If the relationships that I observed between white teachers and Afro/Caribbean students can be validly compared with those described by Driver in the early 1970s, then there had been a process of mutual adjustment, an anglicisation (for want of a better word) of Afro/Caribbean youth culture, and an increase in the cultural competence of white teachers. This appeared to reduce cultural confusion and uncertainty and helped to create more harmonious teacher-student relationships and equitable treatment.

It must be said, however, that Milltown High, because of its situation in a long established multicultural area and its engagement with the issue of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education, was probably a school in which this process was most likely to happen. For the same reasons it was a school where one might least have expected to find evidence to support the theories discussed above. Clearly we need more research on multi-ethnic schools in order to establish if, when and under what circumstances the processes outlined in these theories occur.

It might be suggested that my study lends some support for the fourth theory. Many students in the school clearly did not live up to their teachers' conception of the 'ideal student' (Becker 1952b), something which is largely based on the culturally dominant definitions of mainstream, white, middle class society, and found it difficult to display the appropriate 'cultural capital' to be seen as successful by their teachers. Moreover, although this generally applied equally to both main ethnic groups and Afro/Caribbean students were not, on the whole, evaluated less highly than their white peers, the behaviour of older Afro/Caribbean boys tended to be regarded less favourably. In a sense their youth cultural norms conformed less closely to the teachers' conceptions

of the 'ideal' and as a result they seemed somewhat more likely to be allocated to lower status groups in the school's system of differentiation. Thus it could be argued that teachers' cultural conceptions of the 'ideal student' placed many students, and especially Afro/Caribbean boys, at Milltown High at a disadvantage. In a sense this is true, but the problem with this argument, and indeed with the theory on which it is based, is that it implies that teachers' conceptions of student worth are somehow at fault and that if only they changed their culturally biased definitions then the problem of underachievement would vanish. This is to fall rather foolishly into the trap of cultural relativism in which no knowledge or quality is or should be any more valued than any other. As several writers have pointed out (see for example Lawton 1977) this argument is naive and dangerous. The evaluative criteria used by teachers will and should inevitably be based on the qualities and knowledge which are valued in the wider society, and whilst every effort should be made to ensure that such qualities and knowledge are necessary, relevant and not unduly narrow, in an industrial society certain values and therefore certain conceptions of worth will predominate. It is worth noting that teachers at Milltown High had to some extent broadened their conceptions of worth to include certain cultural characteristics of minority groups.

My study does, however, support an alternative explanation of the tendency for Afro/Caribbean youngsters to underachieve. At Milltown High School they did not in fact underachieve in comparison with their white peers. But they attended a school where achievement levels and norms were generally low for all students. Moreover, many students were hostile or at best ambivalent to their schooling and as a result teachers were frequently forced to orientate their efforts to control and survival rather than the academic progress of the students. The fact that Afro/Caribbean students are more likely to attend inner-city schools like Milltown High is likely to amplify the existing cultural and economic disadvantages of home background that many such students face. My study suggests that Afro/Caribbean students are more likely to be disadvantaged by differences between schools than differential treatment within them. It is important to note that many white working class students are likely to be equally disadvantaged by attending such schools. Thus perhaps class factors in the educational system are or have become more significant than racial or ethnic ones.

The final theoretical question that I raised was whether the curriculum of Milltown High encouraged amongst its students values and attitudes supportive of contemporary social organisation. I have already explained that I did not find this to be the case in the areas of the formal curriculum I observed. In fact here students appeared more likely to be exposed to views which were critical of existing social arrangements. Moreover, a number of the teachers in the school were committed to the development of a hidden curriculum with less emphasis on conformity, obedience and autocratic teacher-student relationships, and greater emphasis on active student participation, more egalitarian social relationships and critical thinking. However, in practice such a hidden curriculum was difficult to realise and, faced with student disruption and potential classroom disorder, teachers were forced to adopt more traditional autocratic roles and orientate their teaching towards control. Further, in the school as a whole, despite often friendly and informal relationships between teachers and students, the two groups were still divided by marked differences of status and power. Thus I think the school's hidden curriculum still tended to encourage conformist attitudes. Whether it actually had this effect on students is, of course, another matter.

Policy Implications

One of the policy implications of this study is that teachers need more specific advice and guidance about how to implement policies on Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education. Even at Milltown High, a school committed to Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education, there was still confusion and uncertainty amongst some of the staff about what the L.E.A. and school policy actually meant in practical terms. Although the L.E.A. had adopted a number of strategies to secure the implementation of its policy and had generally been supportive of teachers wishing to reform their practice, it had not helped to any great extent to clarify the implications of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education for school practice (4). Its approach, which left the main task of operationalising policy to individual schools and teachers, was, in my view, inadequate. The L.E.A., its inspectors, advisers and support teachers should offer much more guidance to schools by specifying the forms that racism can take both inside and outside schools and how they feel teachers can best combat them, by explaining how they see the implications of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education for curriculum, pedagogy and school organisation, and by outlining how Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism link with broader commitments to equal opportunities for all students.

I do not mean to imply here that the control of such matters be taken out of the hands of teachers and governing bodies. Teachers in consultation with governors must still make the final decisions about what (5) and how to teach, and how their school is best organised. This is perhaps especially true in the teaching of 'sensitive' topics like race relations where emotions can run high and there is always a danger that racist attitudes can be enflamed. But I do feel that the L.E.A. should play a more definitive role in a dialogue with schools on how they might implement policy.

At the school level similar points can be made about policy statements. As with L.E.A. statements there is a tendency for them to be couched in rather vague rhetorical terms. Again it is important that, after full and broadly based discussion, they specify more precisely the implications of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education for teacher practice and school organisation.

Perhaps here the academic and research community has a responsibility to help clarify these practical implications. Despite the proliferation of prescriptive literature in this area, Anti-Racists especially have failed to

map out how they see their particular educational ideology being practically applied in schools. They have preferred to adopt a critical stance towards L.E.A.s and schools, pointing out faults in existing practice and provision, sometimes correctly so, but at other times with little understanding of school processes, teachers and the constraints under which teachers operate. Teachers are often viewed as, at best, cultural dopes naively reproducing the social structure, at worst, as racist monsters ensuring the failure of every black student they teach. This work has, I hope, gone some way towards helping to clarify the principles of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education and the way they might be applied in schools. More needs to be done along these lines in INSET, which is largely provided after all by the academic community.

I have already given my views on the principles of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education at length. I want now to raise some of the practical policy issues which relate to my two key themes of equal opportunities and education for a non-racist society. First, equal opportunities. I have argued that one of the prerequisites of equal opportunities is the elimination from schools of practices which serve to reduce the chances of success of students from particular racial or ethnic groups. Unfortunately, despite having an Anti-Racist policy the staff at Milltown High had no means of knowing whether this had been achieved. How might they have done this? One suggestion has been what is termed 'ethnic monitoring', a practice which is increasingly being introduced by employers committed to equal opportunities. Here the ethnic or racial background of job applicants and present employees is recorded and the information is used to examine questions such as: are representative proportions (from the local population) of ethnic minority people applying for and being offered jobs in the company or organisation, does the present work force have a representative proportion of ethnic minority people, do they achieve promotion, and so on.

In schools it has been suggested that ethnic monitoring be used to examine the academic progress of students from different ethnic or racial backgrounds, their attendance rates, the proportions of such students in different classes, ability groups, options or extra-curricular activities, and the relationship between ethnicity/race and the working of the school's disciplinary system (see for example Marland 1986). It is argued that such a scheme could be of use in identifying potential inequities, in providing accurate up to date information on the relative academic progress of students from different

ethnic or racial groups, and in establishing more clearly the specific needs of students from particular racial or ethnic groups. Whilst I feel that ethnic monitoring can provide useful information on some of these areas it has a number of problems. First, there are practical problems in establishing meaningful ethnic or racial categories and an acceptable and workable system of recording students' ethnic/racial backgrounds. Then there are complex questions about the ownership of and access to the data which is produced and how it will be used (see Runnymede Trust and the Radical Statistics Group 1980). If schools are to introduce ethnic monitoring then they will clearly have to engage in lengthy consultation with parents and representatives of ethnic and racial groups in order to resolve such issues.

In my view the most problematic question is what ethnic monitoring tells us, if anything, about school processes. If we find, for example, that Afro/Caribbean students have lower achievement levels than white children in a school in some particular field, does this tell us that there are processes operating within the school which disadvantage those students? I think the answer is that it does not. Students may have entered the school at different levels and differential achievement may be the result of a wide range of factors many of which are external to the school. If we found, as a result of ethnic monitoring, that Afro/Caribbean students are disproportionately represented in low streams, bands or sets would this be an indication of school processes disadvantaging such students? In one sense it might be - if we believe that allocation to a low status group in school disadvantages because student motivation is reduced and low status groups receive inferior treatment. But this would be more a comment on the system of differentiation itself, rather than on the ethnic imbalance. In other words it would be an injustice even if there were no ethnic imbalance and it is not an injustice revealed by ethnic monitoring. If, on the other hand, we believe that systems of streaming, banding or setting are reasonable and appropriate an ethnic imbalance may, in fact, be perfectly fair. It could quite simply be the result of meritocratic allocation procedures and the differential achievement of particular ethnic or racial groups in a school rather than any unfair discrimination. Unfortunately ethnic monitoring tends to encourage the idea that all is well in a school if students are found in ethnically representative proportions in any particular field or group. This is not the case. Indeed ethnically representative proportions may conceal as many injustices as

unrepresentative proportions. In short ethnic monitoring actually tells us very little about the operation of school processes.

Perhaps a more effective strategy to eliminate practices which disadvantage particular ethnic or racial groups and to check whether this has been achieved would be the regular and systematic examination of actual school practices and procedures, following thorough discussions in which potentially disadvantageous practices are clearly defined and their indicators identified (my introductory chapter could serve as an initial guide here). Teachers could examine their own and their colleagues' attitudes to ethnic and racial differences (6), their classroom practice and the processes of assessment and decision-making in which they are routinely involved. Here perhaps the development of collective or cooperative forms of mutual observation and appraisal are most appropriate. Small groups of teachers could work together, perhaps with the assistance of an independent researcher/consultant, to examine their own practice (see Foster and Troyna 1988 for a possible model). Training in racism awareness may be of assistance here as long as such training is orientated to identifying the ways in which specific school practices may disadvantage students from particular ethnic or racial groups, rather than to engendering a sort of collective messianic guilt which is of little practical help.

We can also make a case here for the postponement of formal differentiation. In a school like the banded Beachside Comprehensive described by Ball (1981), where students were allocated to ability bands before they entered the school, and where those groups were then treated differently, there was obviously inequality of opportunity which, moreover, was unequal on class lines. If equal opportunities is our aim then clearly this sort of system is undesirable. My study has shown that mixed ability grouping, the postponement of formal differentiation, and a flexible system of differentiation when it is introduced reduces inequality of opportunity within the school deriving from the premature (and therefore potentially inaccurate) assessment and categorisation of students. When formal differentiation is employed then the criteria used in selecting students must be relevant and necessary to the opportunity which is being competed for and the methods used to assess student worth must be rigorous. This implies not just a reliance on one-off, 11+ type examinations, nor a reliance only on the subjective views of individual teachers. Both systems can clearly be unreliable and subject to

bias. Several different forms of assessment, which should be examined for potential cultural bias, should be used and cross-checked to ensure maximum fairness in the system.

However, it is also important to consider the question of equal opportunities across the educational system as a whole rather than just within schools. While it is difficult to say conclusively that this is the case, my study suggests that, for want of a better word, the 'ethos' of schools like Milltown High may not be as advantageous to their students as might be (and should be) the case. Thus students attending such schools, who are likely to be disproportionately from ethnic minority groups, are likely to be disadvantaged.

This leads me to question the supposed merits of small, inner city neighbourhood comprehensive schools. It is argued that such schools provide a personalised, less anonymous environment within easy travelling distance for their students, that they can build up strong links with their feeder primary schools so that curriculum continuity is ensured, that they can act as a valuable community resource and become a focus of community life, that parents can enjoy easy access to the school and that teachers can get to know parents more closely and work with them more constructively. Some of these benefits are important and may be realised in such schools, but several are more myth than reality. As studies of other schools have shown it is quite possible to break down larger schools into more personalised units (see for example Watts 1977) and at secondary school level the majority of students are able and willing to travel a few miles to school. Strong links with primary schools are important, but in practice it is extremely difficult to coordinate the curricula of several different institutions. Often a secondary school can become a community focus, but there are generally many other institutions that can, and are perhaps better able to fulfil, this neighbourhood role. This was certainly the case in the area that Milltown High served. I would also maintain that a secondary school does not need to be on the door step to develop constructive links with parents.

Thus the actual benefits of a neighbourhood comprehensive school in the inner city may be less than we think. The big disadvantage of such schools is, of course, the very fact that they are not 'comprehensive' at all and in present circumstances they are likely to become less so. Recent government legislation has given parents increased power to select a secondary school for their children and as we have seen in Milltown the more aware parents have

chosen to use these powers, and the space created in the system by falling rolls, to ensure their child a place in a 'better' school. As a result an educational 'apartheid' appears to be developing in which those with money or the cultural resources to manipulate the system ensure that their children go to certain schools, whilst the children of those without these resources (who are likely to be disproportionately working class and from ethnic minorities) fill up the remaining ones. Schools like Milltown High are left to cope with with falling numbers and an increasing concentration of students with severe educational problems who are ambivalent or hostile towards their schooling. The result is declining staff morale and a schooling in which teachers are forced to direct their energies to control rather than learning.

The implication of all this is that L.E.A. discussions about the types of secondary school that they provide and the location of those schools should consider critically the priority which they give to small neighbourhood schools. It may well be that larger schools located in areas between the inner cities and the more suburban areas and serving both may be more effective in ensuring equal provision for all groups within the L.E.A.. Such schools might be more likely to avoid the sorts of developments that I have described, would create greater opportunities for the social mixing to which the comprehensive school principle aspires, and would provide a broader base to the idea of 'the community school'.

I have also argued that the principle of equal opportunities involves positive provision in favour of those students who are educationally disadvantaged as a result of the inadequate material and cultural resources of their home background. However, as I have explained, enormous problems are raised here because of the difficulty of defining and assessing educational disadvantage, especially where this relates to ethnicity and race, and devising acceptable and effective compensatory provision. Much more research needs to be done on this issue to identify more clearly the educational disadvantages and therefore the needs of particular ethnic and racial groups. It is also important to emphasise that educational disadvantages are not confined to particular racial or ethnic groups. Many working class students also face disadvantages. Educational disadvantages, in fact, often stem from a complex inter-relationship of class and ethnic or racial factors. Research must also examine these issues.

In the meantime there is a strong case to be made for the extension of schemes to provide additional resources to areas and schools containing significant numbers of educationally disadvantaged students using definitions and methods of assessment developed for the Educational Priority Area schemes established following the Plowden Report, whilst recognising that indicators of educational disadvantage will inevitably be imprecise and such schemes may fail to provide additional resources for all those who are disadvantaged (see J.Barnes 1975). There is also a case for continued additional provision for those students whose first language is not English and for adopting a fairly broad definition of this term. The paramount aim here should be to maximise student competence in mainstream, 'standard' English, whilst respecting and where possible building on the 'language a student brings to school'. The work that some of the English teachers at Milltown High were doing in cooperation with the local 'Caribbean English Project' seemed an interesting model. They aimed to explore different types of oral and written language use, encouraging students to be confident in using a variety of language forms, whilst at the same time improving their competence in 'standard' English. But again there is a need for greater clarification of students' 'second stage' language needs and how they can be most effectively met.

Another possibility is to allocate additional resources to schools where significant numbers of students are failing to reach specified minimum levels of attainment and to students within schools who fail to reach such levels. This, of course, is the policy already adopted in many schools which operate 'remedial' or 'learning support' schemes. The aim is to bring all students to a basic minimum level of attainment. This idea is not based on the view that everyone should receive equal total educational provision (as in the principle of equal opportunities), but on the view that it is unjust to allow some, no matter what their innate ability, to fail to achieve basic minimum educational standards needed in our society. The idea is that additional educational resources should be provided in schools not just to those who are disadvantaged by virtue of home background, but to those students who fail, for whatever reason, to achieve certain minimum standards. Of course such underachievement may be the result of disadvantage, but it may also be the result of poor innate ability. This idea seems eminently reasonable and just, and it may well be that, in the absence of accurate ways of assessing educational disadvantage, such schemes may be a more practical means of

directing positive provision. As educational disadvantage and underachievement are strongly linked they may also be one way of directing additional resources in favour of disadvantaged students.

I do not have a great deal extra to say here on the policy implications of education for non-racism. There is a need, especially at the school level, to establish more clearly the aims, objectives content and pedagogy of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education and its place within a broader programme of social and political education and the curriculum as a whole (soon, of course, to become the new national curriculum). As this type of work will come into several different subject areas it is also important that schools adopt a co-ordinated approach which avoids unnecessary duplication and inconsistency. This is sometimes difficult as secondary schools tend to be dominated by subject departments often working in isolation. There is perhaps a need in schools for a curriculum co-ordinating group led by a senior teacher to take an overview. Such a group could also play an important part in assessing the effectiveness of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education and in accumulating ideas and experiences of good practice. It could provide a focus for teachers wishing to research and develop their own practice on the lines suggested by Lawrence Stenhouse (1975). It remains to be seen to what extent teachers can work along these lines within the framework of the new national curriculum.

Such a curriculum group and teachers involved in social and political education need also to develop a code of practice on the content and pedagogy of social and political education not least to ensure that they are able to respond confidently to accusations that they are seeking political 'indoctrination' rather than education. Whilst it will be difficult to establish an agreement of what is meant by 'balance' and 'bias' in this area, teachers must consider and make decisions on these issues (see Jones 1985 and Stradling et al 1984 for sensible suggestions). As I explained in my introductory chapter the teachers' role should be to ensure that students have the opportunity to examine a variety of perspectives on social and political issues. This need not necessarily require them to always present a balance of views on particular issues in the classroom. Their aim should be what Stradling et al (1984) term 'balanced learning' rather than balanced presentation. This means they must begin with an assessment of the existing biases of their students and attempt to increase their awareness of

alternative arguments and opinions. However, this does not mean that they are justified in presenting only their own viewpoints. To do this would be to abuse their privileged position, to curtail rather than foster the free exchange of ideas which is so important in a democratic society, and reduce rather than enhance students' opportunities to make their own judgements and decisions. A code of practice in this area should also attempt to specify the limits of views and political opinion which can be accepted and presented as legitimate in the classroom and also the sorts of teaching strategies that might be used in social and political education.

Further Research

As I explained in earlier this case study is part of a programme of research which has attempted to address the question of how the British educational system has responded to the presence of ethnic minorities. I have described the way in which one secondary school has responded in terms of policy and practice. Hopefully my work will be of value to policy makers in Milltown and in Milltown High School who appear to have few resources available to examine in detail what happens to their policies in practice. Hopefully too those policy makers and practitioners seeking to move in similar directions will find it useful to read about the experiences, problems and pitfalls of a school which has attempted to come to grips with this issue. Perhaps also my work will act as something of a corrective to those who are prone to making gross generalisations (usually negative) about the way in which schools in Britain have responded to ethnic diversity.

There are, I am convinced, many other schools and teachers who are attempting constructively to come to grips with many of the issues raised in this study. One important avenue for further research is to document their efforts and to try to estimate their effectiveness so that we can build up a knowledge of 'good' practice in this area. It is important also to examine the dilemmas which face teachers who attempt to implement Multicultural and Anti-Racist policy and the constraints that impinge upon them. By doing this we will be better able to facilitate the 'good' practice that we wish to see. There is clearly a need for more collaborative work (of the sort that I originally envisaged doing) with teachers who are attempting to review and change their established practices. Few teachers have the time or expertise to systematically evaluate any changes that they make in their curriculum, pedagogy or wider school practice. Here research workers can surely fulfil a positive role in helping to clarify the aims of proposed changes, observe their implementation and assess their effects. In short, in the development of what Stenhouse (1975) calls 'research based teaching'.

We also need more research on the progress and experiences of minority students in the education system. We still have remarkably little information on the way ethnic minority students are affected by in-school processes. How, in fact, are such students perceived by their teachers? Are the views of some teachers negative and racist as many commentators would have us believe? They

were not at Milltown High School, but perhaps this school is unusual. We simply do not know. Moreover, if we do find that some teachers subscribe to such views, we need to know how or if they transfer into action in the classroom or in other areas of school practice. Are minority students treated differently from their white peers, if so in what ways? Do minority students perceive such differential treatment and if the views of teachers are transmitted in the school and classroom how are they received? Do they affect students' identity and motivation? There seems to be considerable scope for distortion here. In other words it is not simply a matter of students taking on unquestioningly the views of their teachers. The process of identity formation is far more complex than this. We need to examine the influence of the student's parents, siblings and peers, and the effect of social class and gender as well as ethnicity. What we have at the moment is much common-sense and sometimes simplistic theorising and very little empirical work. If we are to move towards a more accurate picture of the real social processes that occur in schools then we need far more empirical research in schools and classrooms.

Moreover, we do not just need research into the way ethnic minority students fare within schools, we need to investigate wider educational systems and the progress of minority students through them. Is it the case, for example, that minority students are disproportionately allocated to less 'effective' schools where their opportunities of achieving high status qualifications is limited (7)? If so why does this occur and what actions can be taken to prevent this happening?

The lack of research and consequent lack of knowledge about what happens to ethnic minority students in the education system means unfortunately that debate in this area remains at the level of assertion and counter assertion. The Rampton Report (Committee of Inquiry 1981) was rightly criticised for basing many of its conclusions on very scanty evidence, and yet the Swann Report (Committee of Enquiry 1985) published four years later included little more of substance.

We also need to know more about how ethnic minority teachers fare in the system. We need to know about programmes that are directed to specifically encouraging minority people to become teachers and training them and assess their effectiveness. And we need information about their experiences and careers, and how they cope within a system which is at present in contraction.

We also still know remarkably little about the views and perceptions of different ethnic minority people of their childrens' education, or indeed of their own education since many minority adults have now been educated in Britain. Are, for example, the high educational aspirations characteristic of many immigrants also a feature of their childrens' attitudes towards the education of their children, or do this second generation take on attitudes more similar to the indigenous working class? We also know very little about the perspectives of ethnic minority students (especially those of Asian origin) on their schooling. How do they see their teachers, their peers of the same and different ethnic groups, the school curriculum, Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education; what sub-cultural forms do they create in school life?

We need information on these questions for two main reasons. First, in order to inform policy and practice in this area. It is extremely difficult to formulate sensible, specific and clearly directed policy if we have little idea of what is actually happening in schools or wider educational systems. It is a nonsense, for example, to have policies specifically orientated to eliminating racist attitudes amongst teachers if in fact the vast majority of teachers do not subscribe to such attitudes. To suggest that all teachers must attend compulsory racism awareness training so that they can be led to change their attitudes seems pointless and only serves to alienate and provoke hostility. The second reason for conducting this type of research is a more social scientific one. Sociologists have still made only limited progress in understanding the ways in which modern societies reproduce themselves and maintain their established structures. Race and ethnicity have clearly become very significant features of those societies. If we are to understand how they continue to remain so then we need to understand the role of the educational system in this process of reproduction. Research in this area can help to shed light on these more theoretical issues.

Footnotes

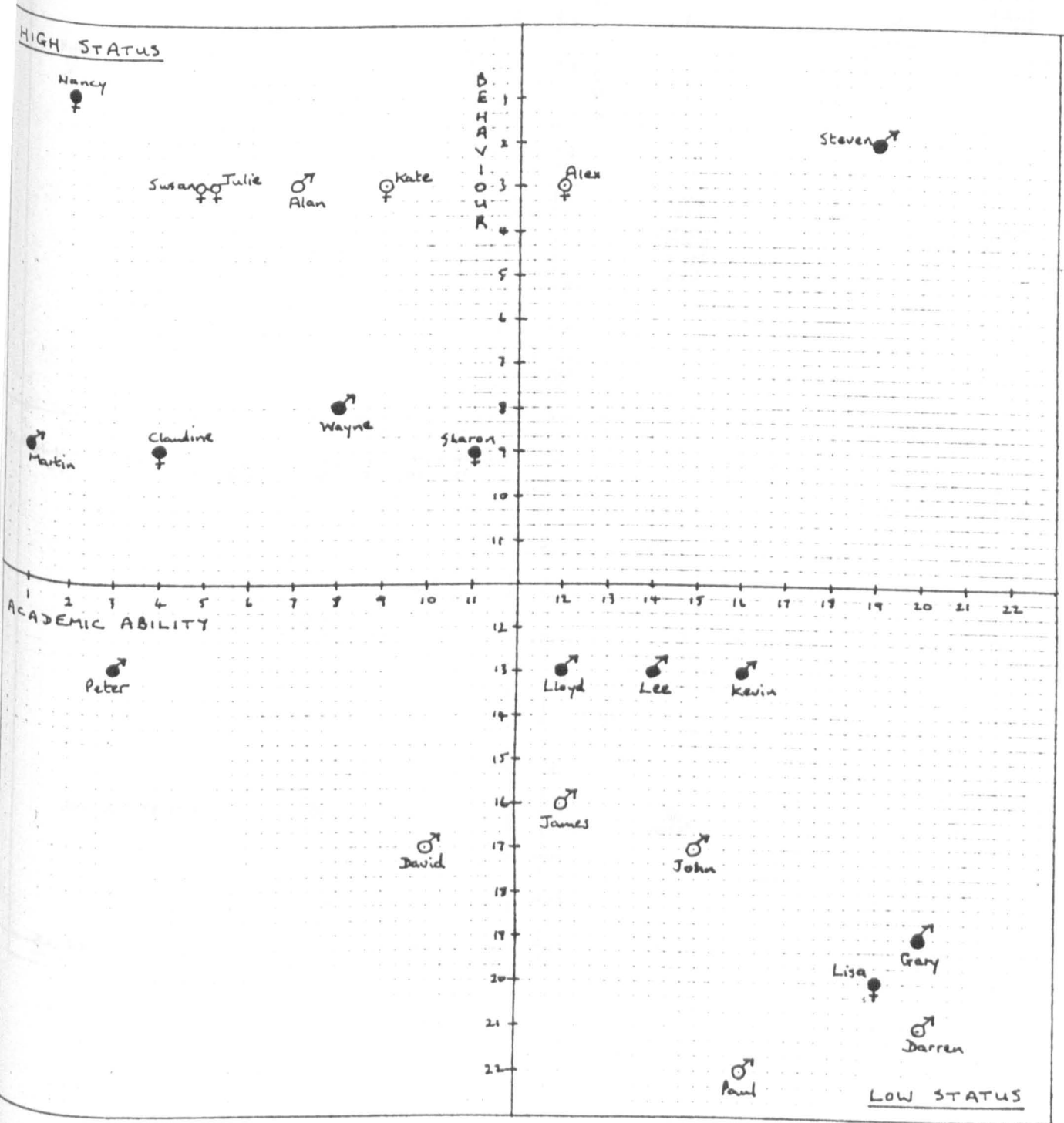
- 1) I did not observe appointments procedures and so this conclusion is based on information given to me by David Benyon and a number of heads of department.
- 2) Of the 25 cleaning staff 16 were of Afro/Caribbean origin, whereas of the 44 teaching staff in September 1986 3 were of Afro/Caribbean origin and one was of Pakistani origin.
- 3) The LEA provided an additional member of staff and extra nursery class places in some primary schools where the proportion of children receiving free school meals was above a certain level
- 4) At the time of writing the L.E.A. has drafted and circulated informally a more detailed policy on Anti-Racism. In it there is an attempt to define racism, specify more clearly its impact on schools and suggest the form that Anti-Racist Education might take.
- 5) Obviously now within the constraints of the national curriculum.
- 6) This tended to happen informally at Milltown High School.
- 7) Mortimore et al (1988) found there was a tendency for this to happen in the Inner London primary schools they studied.

**TEXT
BOUND INTO THE
SPINE**

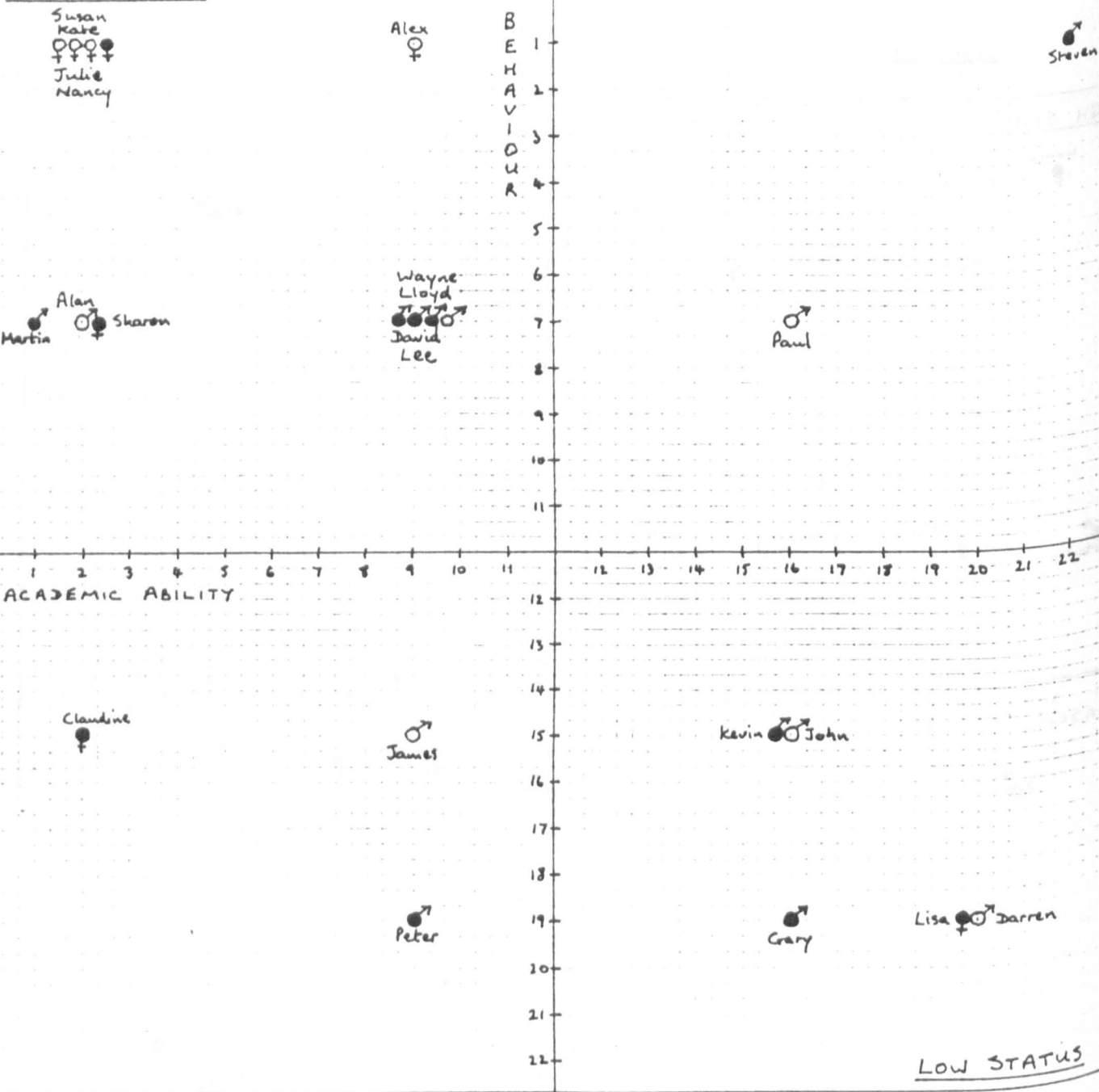
Appendix 1

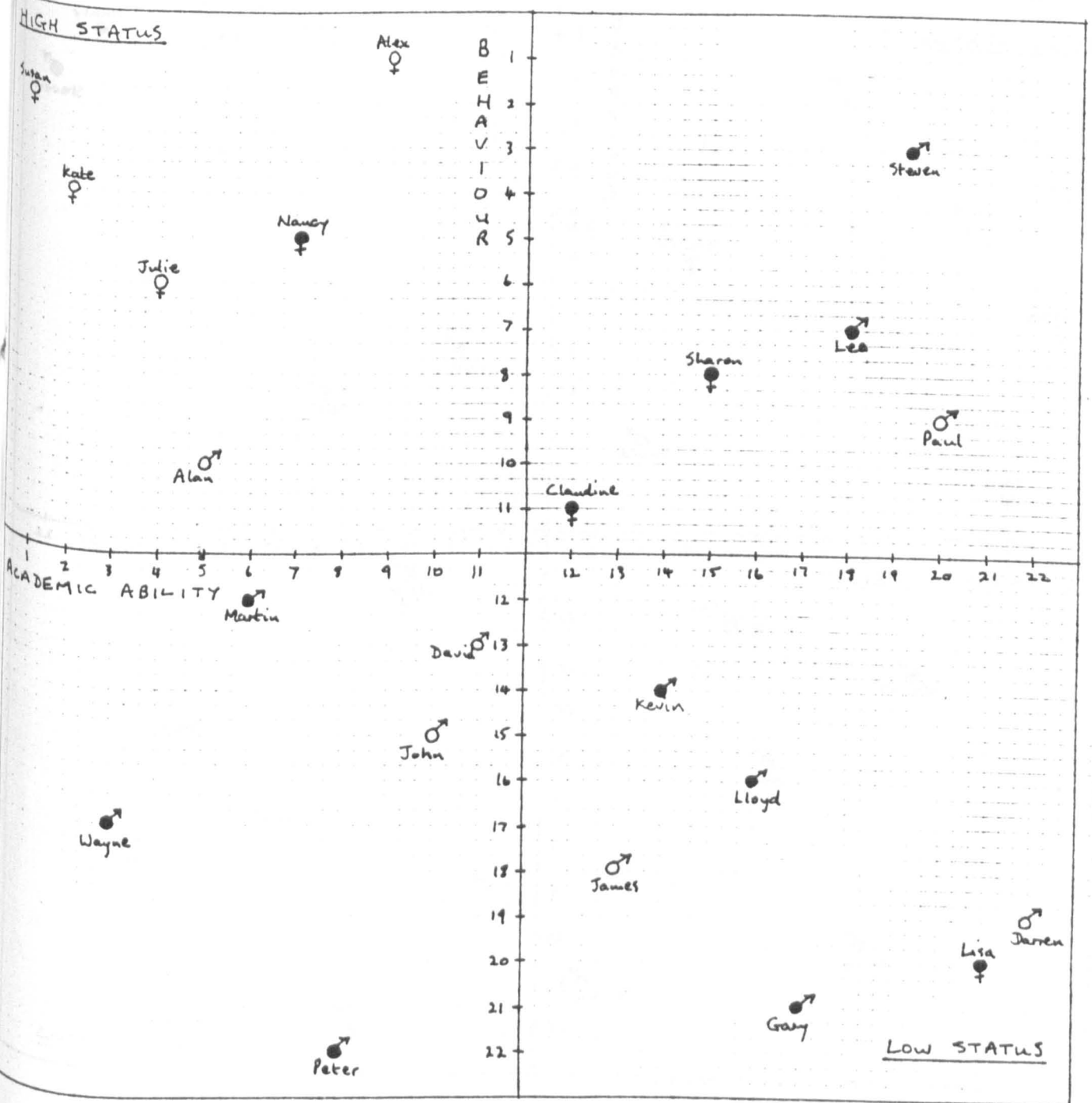
Student status based on academic and behavioural rankings by teachers of 3GH

Humanities

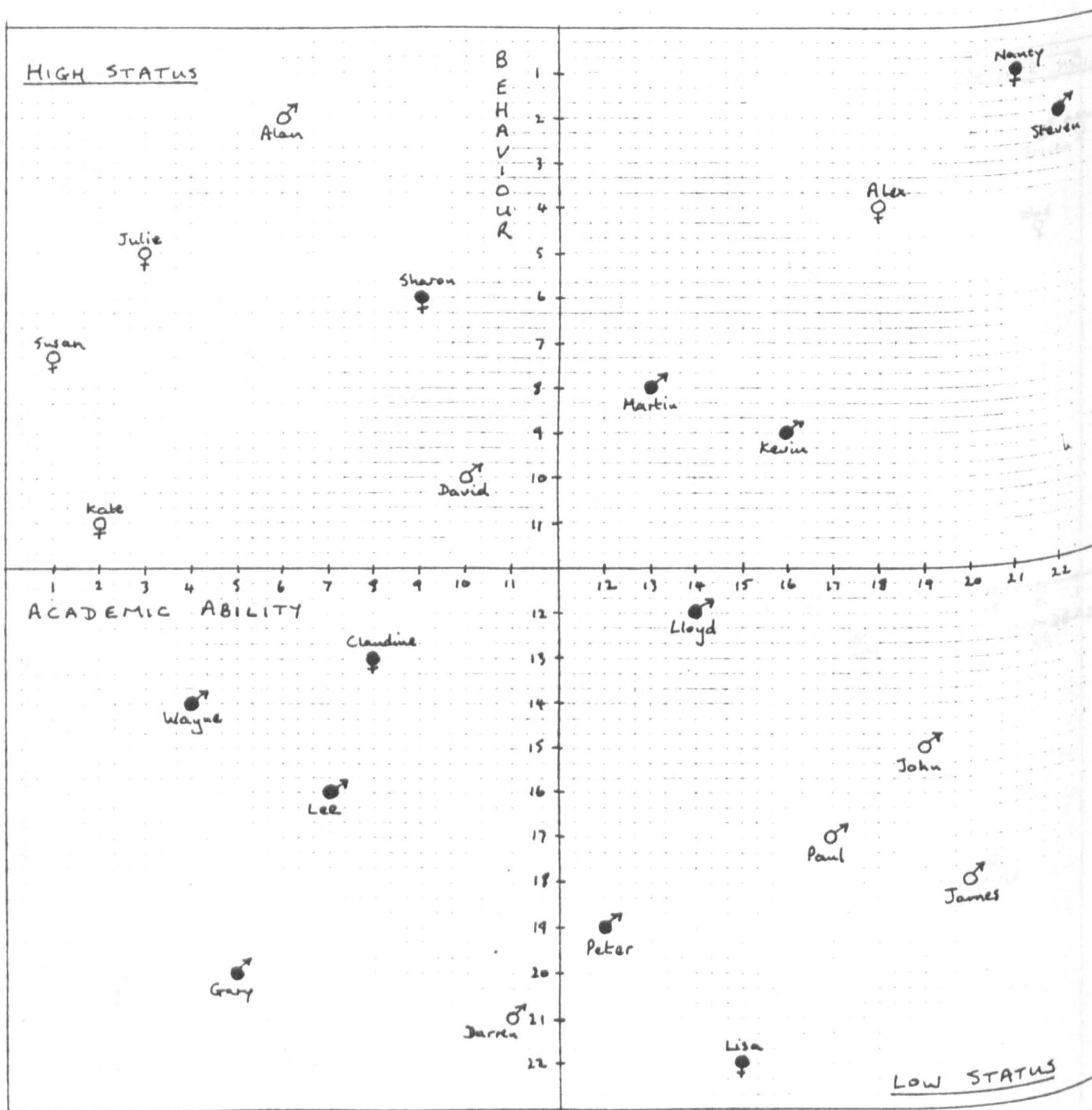


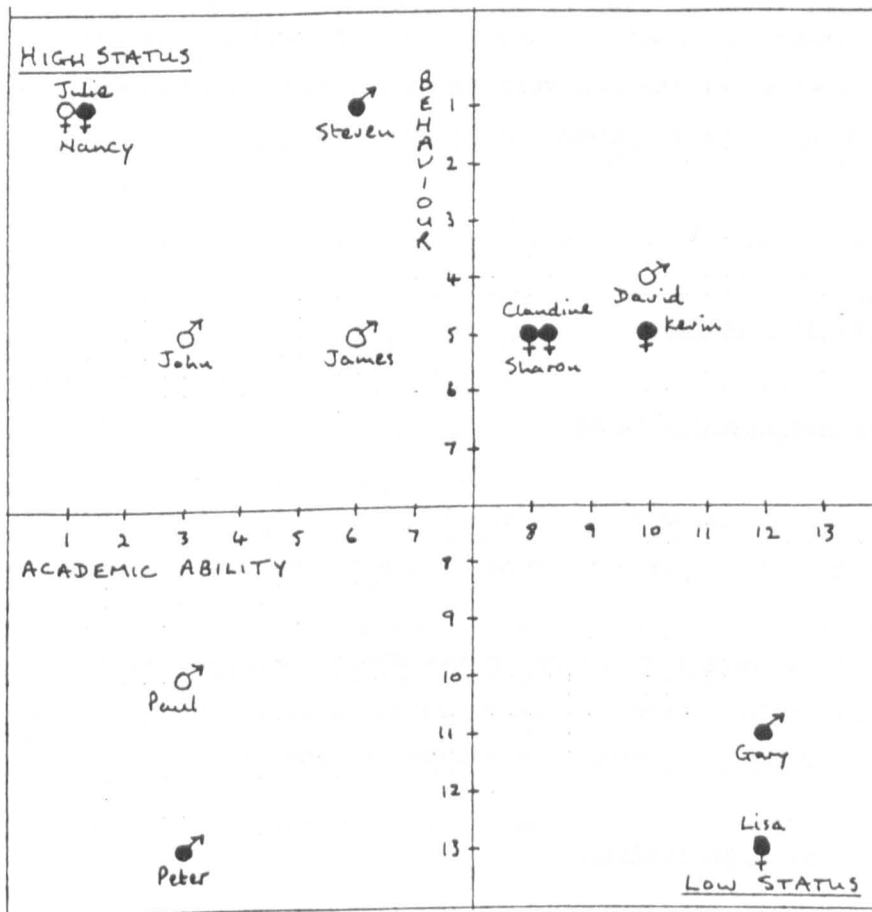
HIGH STATUS





Maths





Appendix 2

The following coding scheme was used in the analysis of teacher-student interaction in the case study of the 3rd year class reported in chapter 8. It is based on the Brophy-Good Dyadic Interaction System (Brophy and Good 1970, 1974, 1984)

PUBLIC TEACHER-STUDENT INTERACTION

Teacher initiated response opportunities

- 1) Reading turn - student is asked to read aloud.
- 2) Direct question - student is asked by name a direct question in public class talk.
- 3) Open question - teacher asks a question to the whole class, students indicate their willingness to answer by, for example, raising their hand, the teacher then selects, usually by naming, the student to answer.

Student initiated response opportunities

- 4) Student question - student asks a question to teacher in public class talk.
- 5) Student statement - student makes a statement to teacher in public class talk.
- 6) Call-out - student calls out the answer to a teacher question without being requested to respond.

Quality of student answers to teacher's questions

- 7) Correct answers - student answers the question in a way that satisfies the teacher.
- 8) Incorrect answers - student answers the question wrongly
- 9) Don't know - student indicates they do not know the answer to the question.
- 10) No response - student makes no response to the teacher's question.

Teacher feedback to student response opportunity

- 11) Praise - teacher compliments the student on their contribution.
- 12) Affirmation - teacher indicates that the student's response is correct or acceptable.
- 13) Summary - teacher summarises the student's response (usually as part of affirmation).
- 14) No feedback - teacher gives no verbal or non-verbal feedback.
- 15) Negation - teacher indicates that student's response is incorrect.
- 16) Criticism - teacher expresses anger or personal criticism of the student as well as indicating incorrectness of response.
- 17) Gives answer - teacher gives the student the answer to a question that the student has failed to answer correctly.
- 18) Process feedback - teacher explains the process that has to be gone through to arrive at the answer.
- 19) Asks other - teacher moves to another student to answer the question.
- 20) Repeats question - teacher repeats the question to the same student.
- 21) Rephrase or cue - teacher rephrases the question or gives a clue to the same student.
- 22) Expansion - teacher asks the same student to expand their answer.
- 23) Answers student question - teacher answers student's question or responds to student statement.

PRIVATE TEACHER-STUDENT INTERACTION

Teacher initiated

- 1) Work related - teacher discusses student work.
- 2) Behaviour related -
 - a) Praise - teacher praises student behaviour
 - b) Criticism - teacher warning or rebuke in response to student behaviour (in the tables in the text these are included under public interaction as many occurred during class discussion).
- 3) Procedural - teacher explains classroom procedures or asks the student to complete some procedural task.

Student initiated

- 4) Work related - student asks teacher to discuss aspects of their work.
- 5) Procedural - student asks teacher about classroom procedures.

In using this coding scheme in the classroom I used a sheet with student names along the vertical axis and the above behavioural categories along the horizontal. Each time a particular student was involved in interaction with the teacher the action was coded under the appropriate category. The system gives an indication of the number and types of interaction that a teacher has with individual students, but has a number of problems. Certain categories of action are difficult to identify consistently and certain actions may not be codable. Moreover, the categories for private teacher-student interaction give no indication of the length or quality of the interaction.

Appendix 3 - Exam Results and Ethnic Background - 1986

Attainment in public examinations by ethnic group and gender

	Afro/Caribbean		White		Asian	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
5 or more Olevels or CSE grade 1s	1	0	0	0	1	0
1 - 4 Olevels or CSE grade 1s	5	8	4	2	0	0
CSEs	11	8	9	8	2	1
None	7	2	10	5	0	0

O level/CSE grade 1 Pass Rates

Afro/Caribbean - Boys - 0.59 passes per student

Girls - 1.2 passes per student

White - Boys - 0.22 passes per student

Girls - 0.15 passes per student

These rates were calculated by totaling the number of O level/CSE grade 1 passes for each gender/ethnic group (there were some students who were 'double entered' and achieved both - in this case only one was counted) and dividing by the number of such students in the year.

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